

# Acts 19 Commentary

PREVIOUS

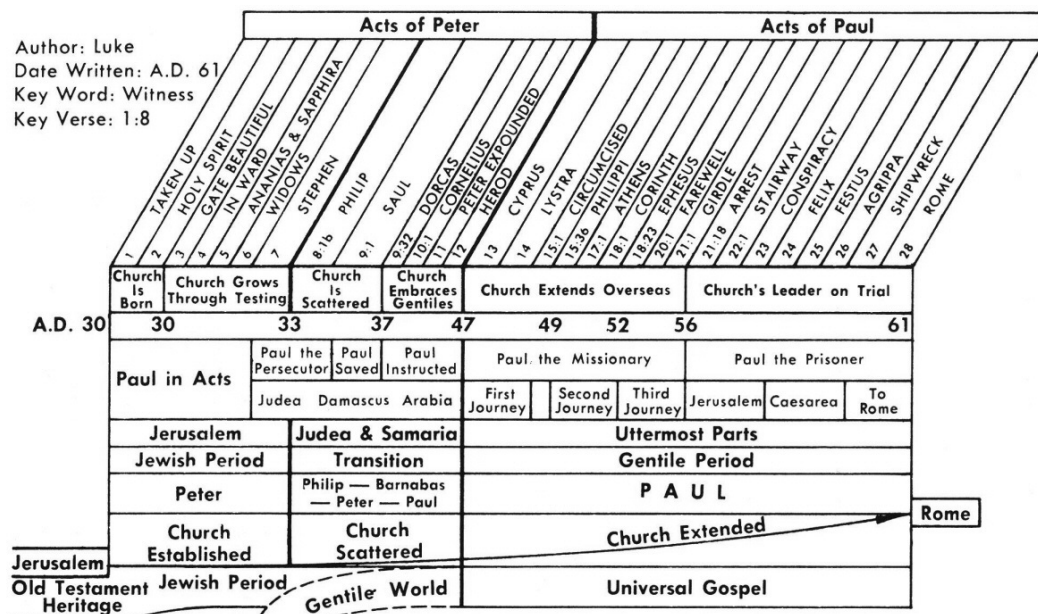
NEXT

CLICK VERSE

To go directly to that verse

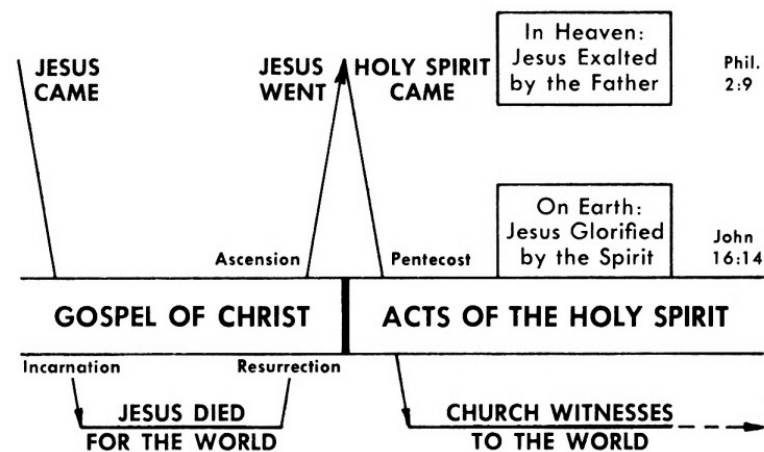
- [Acts 19:1](#)
  - [Acts 19:2](#)
  - [Acts 19:3](#)
  - [Acts 19:4](#)
  - [Acts 19:5](#)
  - [Acts 19:6](#)
  - [Acts 19:7](#)
  - [Acts 19:8](#)
  - [Acts 19:9](#)
  - [Acts 19:10](#)
  - [Acts 19:11](#)
  - [Acts 19:12](#)
  - [Acts 19:13](#)
  - [Acts 19:14](#)
  - [Acts 19:15](#)
  - [Acts 19:16](#)
  - [Acts 19:17](#)
  - [Acts 19:18](#)
  - [Acts 19:19](#)
  - [Acts 19:20](#)
  - [Acts 19:21](#)
  - [Acts 19:22](#)
  - [Acts 19:23](#)
  - [Acts 19:24](#)
  - [Acts 19:25](#)
  - [Acts 19:26](#)
  - [Acts 19:27](#)
  - [Acts 19:28](#)
  - [Acts 19:29](#)
  - [Acts 19:30](#)
  - [Acts 19:31](#)
  - [Acts 19:32](#)
  - [Acts 19:33](#)
  - [Acts 19:34](#)
  - [Acts 19:35](#)
  - [Acts 19:36](#)
  - [Acts 19:37](#)
  - [Acts 19:38](#)
  - [Acts 19:39](#)
  - [Acts 19:40](#)
  - [Acts 19:41](#)
-

Author: Luke  
 Date Written: A.D. 61  
 Key Word: Witness  
 Key Verse: 1:8



Click chart to enlarge  
 Chart from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission  
 Swindoll's Overview of Acts

### THE EXPANDING WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT-EMPOWERED CHURCH



Click chart to enlarge

Considering the fact that Acts 13 is such a strategic chapter in regard to world evangelism, take a moment and study Irving Jensen's chart at top of the page (click it to enlarge it which is what I have to do at age 72!). Notice the **bold vertical line** (|) at the end of Acts 12 and beginning of Acts 13 which Jensen estimates to be about year 47 (it could be a short time prior). Note the horizontal description of "**Church**" - **Church Established** in the first 13 years from Acts 1 through Acts 7, then the **Church Scattered** between Acts 8 through Acts 12, which occurred over a period of about 14 years (and remember all dates and times are at best approximations because Luke gives only a few events that allow us to give specific dates, such as the death of Herod in A D 44 in Acts 12:23) and lastly, beginning in Acts 13 (and until the end of this age), the **Church Extended**, this extension being the primarily the fruit of Paul's Three Missionary Journeys which "upset the world!" (Acts 17:6) Now, you have a good grasp of the chronological context of Acts 13. And as they say in the restaurant when your delicious meal is served "Enjoy!" The three missionary journeys are summarized below (this note will be repeated in subsequent chapters). Click links for the maps of each journey. See also [Swindoll's Overview of Acts](#) and note especially the line labeled "**Christ in Acts**" which in effect should serve as a "life purpose statement" for every follower of Jesus Christ - "*Jesus is the glorified, enthroned Savior, Who continues His ministry in the world by means of the Holy Spirit working through His disciples until He returns* (Acts 1:7-9+)." This excellent summary statement by Chuck Swindoll begs the question - "Am I doing the works that have been prepared for me in Ephesians 2:10+ in the power of the Spirit or in my fleshly human power? The former bears fruit that will remain for eternity (Jn 15:16) and which brings glory to God the Father (Jn 15:8)! The latter bears what may look like spiritual fruit, but in fact is of no genuine spiritual value (see Jesus' words in Jn 15:5) and will not endure!

<a href="#">Paul's First Missionary Journey</a>	Acts 13:4-14:28
<a href="#">Paul's Second Missionary Journey</a>	Acts 15:36-18:22

- Maps in table above are from the **Holman Bible Atlas** ([Hardcover/Paperback version](#)) copyrighted © 1998 B&H Publishing Group, used by permission, all rights reserved. This is one of the best resources for Bible maps as the maps also include helpful short descriptions of the events portrayed on the maps. Please do not download for use on another website. Thank you.
- [Here is a map](#) with all three journeys on one map.

## THE ITINERARY OF PAUL'S THREE MISSIONARY JOURNEYS

FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">Antioch</a> Acts 13:1-3</li> <li>2. <a href="#">Seleucia</a> Acts 13:4</li> <li>3. <a href="#">Salamis on Cyprus</a> Acts 13:5</li> <li>4. <a href="#">Paphos on Cyprus</a> Acts 13:6-12</li> <li>5. <a href="#">Perga in Pamphylia</a> Acts 13:13</li> <li>6. <a href="#">Pisidian Antioch</a> Acts 13:14-50</li> <li>7. <a href="#">Iconium</a> Acts 13:51</li> <li>8. <a href="#">Lystra</a> Acts 14:6-20</li> <li>9. <a href="#">Derbe</a> Acts 14:20</li> <li>10. <a href="#">Lystra</a> Acts 14:21</li> <li>11. <a href="#">Iconium</a> Acts 14:21</li> <li>12. <a href="#">Pisidian Antioch</a> Acts 14:21</li> <li>13. <a href="#">Pamphylia</a> Acts 14:24</li> <li>14. <a href="#">Perga</a> Acts 14:25</li> <li>15. <a href="#">Attalia</a> Acts 14:25</li> <li>16. <a href="#">Antioch</a> Acts 14:26</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">Antioch</a> Acts 15:36-40</li> <li>2. <a href="#">Syria</a> Acts 15:41</li> <li>3. <a href="#">Cilicia</a> Acts 15:41</li> <li>4. <a href="#">Derbe</a> Acts 16:1</li> <li>5. <a href="#">Lystra</a> Acts 16:1-5</li> <li>6. <a href="#">Phrygia/Galatia</a> Acts 16:6</li> <li>7. <a href="#">Mysia</a> Acts 16:7</li> <li>8. <a href="#">Troas</a> Acts 16:8-10</li> <li>9. <a href="#">Samothrace</a> Acts 16:11</li> <li>10. <a href="#">Neapolis</a> Acts 16:11</li> <li>11. <a href="#">Philippi</a> Acts 16:12</li> <li>12. <a href="#">Amphipolis</a> Acts 17:1</li> <li>13. <a href="#">Apollonia</a> Acts 17:1</li> <li>14. <a href="#">Thessalonica</a> Acts 17:1- 9</li> <li>15. <a href="#">Berea</a> Acts 17:10-14</li> <li>16. <a href="#">Athens</a> Acts 17:15-34</li> <li>17. <a href="#">Corinth</a> Acts 18:1-17</li> <li>18. <a href="#">Cenchreae</a> Acts 18:18</li> <li>19. <a href="#">Ephesus</a> Acts 18:19</li> <li>20. <a href="#">Caesarea</a> Acts 18:22</li> <li>21. <a href="#">Jerusalem</a> Acts 18:22</li> <li>22. <a href="#">Antioch</a> Acts 18:22</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">Antioch</a> Acts 18:23</li> <li>2. <a href="#">Phrygia/Galatia</a> Acts 18:23-28</li> <li>3. <a href="#">Ephesus</a> Acts 19:1-41</li> <li>4. <a href="#">Macedonia</a> Acts 20:1</li> <li>5. <a href="#">Greece</a> Acts 20:2</li> <li>6. <a href="#">Macedonia</a> Acts 20:3-5</li> <li>7. <a href="#">Philippi</a> Acts 20:6</li> <li>8. <a href="#">Troas</a> Acts 20:6-12</li> <li>9. <a href="#">Assos</a> Acts 20:13</li> <li>10. <a href="#">Mitylene</a> Acts 20:14</li> <li>11. <a href="#">Samos</a> Acts 20:15</li> <li>12. <a href="#">Miletus</a> Acts 20:15-38</li> <li>13. <a href="#">Cos</a> Acts 21:1</li> <li>14. <a href="#">Rhodes</a> Acts 21:1</li> <li>15. <a href="#">Patara</a> Acts 21:1</li> <li>16. <a href="#">Tyre</a> Acts 21:3-6</li> <li>17. <a href="#">Ptolemais</a> Acts 21:7</li> <li>18. <a href="#">Caesarea</a> Acts 21:8-14</li> </ol>

**Charles Swindoll** points out that "When we study the journeys of Paul in the book of Acts, we're not just reading the travel log of a man; we're observing the redemptive plan of God unfolding as He promised. Through the ministry of Saul of Tarsus, God's mission to reclaim His creation from the death grip of evil would move to its next stage. The plan of this mission was outlined in the Lord's promise at His ascension, where He said,

"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses...

1. In Jerusalem [Stage 1: Acts 2–7],
2. and in all Judea and Samaria [Stage 2: Acts 8–12],
3. and even to the remotest part of the earth [Stage 3: Acts 13–28]." (Acts 1:8-)

### John Hannah's Outline for Third Missionary Journey

- D. The third missionary journey of Paul (Acts 18:23-21:16)
1. The ministry in Galatia and Phrygia (Acts 18:23)
  2. The ministry in Ephesus (Acts 18:24-19:41)

- a. Instruction of Apollos (Acts 18:24-28)
  - b. Instruction of some of John's followers (Acts 19:1-7)
  - c. Instruction of the Ephesians (Acts 19:8-20)
  - d. Instructions concerning his plans (Acts 19:21-22)
  - e. The riots in Ephesus (Acts 19:23-41)
- 3. The ministry in Macedonia and Achaia (Acts 20:1-5)
- 4. The ministry in Troas (Acts 20:6-12)
- 5. The ministry in Miletus (Acts 20:13-38)
  - a. His journey to Miletus (Acts 20:13-16)
  - b. His message to the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:17-35)
    - 1. Concerning his ministry (Acts 20:17-27)
    - 2. Concerning the church (Acts 20:28-35)
  - c. His farewell to the Ephesians (Acts 20:36-38)
- 6. The ministry at Tyre (Acts 21:1-6)
  - a. His journey to Tyre (Acts 21:1-3)
  - b. His ministry in Tyre (Acts 21:4-6)
- 7. The ministry in Caesarea (Acts 21:7-16)
  - a. Agabus' prediction (Acts 21:7-12)
  - b. Paul's reply (Acts 21:13-14)
  - c. The journey toward Jerusalem (Acts 21:15-16)
- E. The journey of Paul to Rome (Acts 21:17-28:31)
  - 1. His witness in Jerusalem (Acts 21:17-23:35)
    - a. Paul's report to the elders (Acts 21:17-26)
    - b. Paul's arrest (Acts 21:27-36)
    - c. Paul's defense (Acts 21:37-23:10)
      - 1. His first defense (Acts 21:37-22:23)
        - a. The background (Acts 21:37-40)
        - b. The content (Acts 22:1-21)
        - c. The result (Acts 22:22-23)
      - 2. His second defense (Acts 22:24-23:10)
        - a. The background (Acts 22:24-29)
        - b. The council (Acts 22:30)
        - c. The content (Acts 23:1-9)
        - d. The conflict (Acts 23:10)
    - d. Paul's deliverance (Acts 23:11-35)
      - 1. The encouragement (Acts 23:11)
      - 2. The plot (Acts 23:12-16)
      - 3. The counterplot (Acts 23:17-24)
      - 4. The letter to Felix (Acts 23:25-30)
      - 5. The deliverance to Felix (Acts 23:31-35)
  - 2. His witness in Caesarea (Acts 24:1-26:32)
    - a. Paul's defense before Felix (Acts 24:1-27)
      - 1. The setting (Acts 24:1)
      - 2. The accusations of Tertullus (Acts 24:2-9)
      - 3. The reply of Paul (Acts 24:10-21)
      - 4. The consequences (Acts 24:22-27)
    - b. Paul's defense before Festus (Acts 25:1-12)
      - 1. The setting (Acts 25:1-5)
      - 2. The trial (Acts 25:6-11)
      - 3. The result (Acts 25:12)
    - c. Paul's defense before Agrippa (Acts 25:13-26:32)
      - 1. The arrival of Agrippa (Acts 25:13)
      - 2. Festus' presentation of Paul's case (Acts 25:14-22)
      - 3. Festus' presentation of Paul (Acts 25:23-27)
      - 4. Paul's defense before Agrippa (Acts 26:1-23)
      - 5. Paul's answer to Festus (Acts 26:24-26)
      - 6. Paul's interaction with Agrippa (Acts 26:27-29)

7. The conclusion (Acts 26:30-32)

3. His witness on the way to Rome (Acts 27:1-28:15)

a. His witness aboard ship (Acts 27:1-44)

b. His witness on Malta (Acts 28:1-15)

1. Paul's miraculous preservation (Acts 28:1-6)

2. Paul's healing of Publius' father (Acts 28:7-10)

3. Paul's continued journey toward Rome (Acts 28:11-15)

4. His witness in Rome (Acts 28:16-31)

a. The occasion for his witness (Acts 28:16-22)

b. The content of his witness (Acts 28:23-28)

c. The result of his witness (Acts 28:29)

d. The summary of Paul's witness in Rome (Acts 28:30-31)

- [Hannah's Bible Outlines](#) - Recommended Resource

**Acts 19:1 It happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the upper country and came to Ephesus, and found some disciples.**

NET Acts 19:1 While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul went through the inland regions and came to Ephesus. He found some disciples there

GNT Acts 19:1 γνετο ὅτι τὸν πολλοὺν ἐν Κορίνθῳ Παλὸν διελθὼν τὰ ἑσπερια μὲν [κατ]ελθεῖν εἰς φέσον καὶ εἰρηνίαν μαθητῶν

NLT Acts 19:1 While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul traveled through the interior regions until he reached Ephesus, on the coast, where he found several believers.

KJV 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,

ESV Acts 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.

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

CSB Acts 19:1 While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul traveled through the interior regions and came to Ephesus. He found some disciples

NIV Acts 19:1 While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples

- **that:** Ac 18:24-28 1Co 1:12 3:4-7 16:12
- **Paul:** Ac 18:23
- **came:** Ac 18:19-21
- [Acts 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



## THE THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY CONTINUES

This journey began in Acts 18:23 and extends through Acts 21:26, making it by far the longest narrative of Paul's three missionary journeys. Acts 18:23+ describes Paul's journey after leaving Antioch **"And having spent some time there, he left and passed successively through the Galatian region and Phrygia, (click map above) strengthening all the disciples."**

**It happened that while Apollos was at Corinth** (see picture and description of the city) - So in the interlude Luke recorded in Acts 18:24-28+, Paul was beginning his third missionary journey which would in fact have as one of his destinations the city of Ephesus the city to which Apollos had come and had met Priscilla and Aquila.

**Paul passed through the upper country** - "The inland regions." (NET). The Greek word for upper (anoterikos) is used only here and means "upper, higher; of the inland regions of a mountainous country interior." (Friberg) **Thayer** says anoterikos refers to "the part of Asia Minor more remote from the Mediterranean, farther east." **Zodhiates** adds that **anoterikos** means "higher up in the country, further in the inland parts of Asia Minor or more distant from the sea referring to the districts of Phrygia and Galatia."

**Robertson** adds that **anoterikos** "refers to the highlands (cf. Xenophon's Anabasis) and means that Paul did not travel the usual Roman road west by Colossae and Laodicea in the Lycus Valley, cities that he did not visit (Col. 2:1). Instead he took the more direct road through the Cayster Valley to Ephesus."

**Gilbrant** on **anoterikos** - Its use here in Acts 19:1 may indicate that Paul, rather than take the indirect trade route to Ephesus via the valley of the Meander river (the low country), took the more direct route over the hills, reaching Ephesus from the north (Bruce, New International Commentary on the New Testament, 5:384).

**Passed through** (1330) (**dierchomai** from **dia** = through + **erchomai** = come, go) means to go through, to pass through, to move through an area ("When they had **gone through** the whole island" = Acts 13:6+).

All of Luke's frequent uses of **dierchomai** in Acts -

Acts 8:4; Acts 8:40; Acts 9:32; Acts 9:38; Acts 10:38; Acts 11:19; Acts 12:10; Acts 13:6; Acts 13:14; Acts 14:24; Acts 15:3; Acts 15:41; Acts 16:6; Acts 17:23; Acts 18:23; Acts 18:27; Acts 19:1; Acts 19:21; Acts 20:2; Acts 20:25;

**And came to Ephesus** (2181) See description of [Ephesus](#). This was the fulfillment of his earlier promise "taking leave of them and saying, 'I will return to you again if God wills,' he set sail from Ephesus." (Acts 18:21+)

**A T Robertson** - The province of Asia included the western part of Asia Minor. The Romans took this country B.C. 130. Finally the name was extended to the whole continent. It was a jewel in the Roman empire along with Africa and was a senatorial province. It was full of great cities like Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea (the seven churches of Rev. 2 and Rev 3), Colossae, Hierapolis, Apamea, to go no further. Hellenism had full sway here. Ephesus was the capital and chief city and was a richer and larger city than Corinth. It was located at the entrance to the valley of the Maeander to the east. Here was the power of Rome and the splendour of Greek culture and the full tide of oriental superstition and magic. The [Temple of Artemis](#) (or Diana) (see [picture](#)) was one of the [seven wonders of the world](#) (ED: It was 239 x 418 feet some 4x the size of the Parthenon in Athens!)

**And found** ([heurisko](#)) **some disciples** - Who did Paul find in Ephesus? He found about 12 disciples (Acts 19:7) of John the Baptist (Acts 19:3). Luke is not referring to **Apollos** for during Paul's journey to Ephesus, Apollos had sailed over to Corinth, where he "powerfully refuted the Jews in public, demonstrating by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ." (Acts 18:27-28+) **Priscilla and Aquila** were most likely still in Ephesus for Paul writes to the Corinthians that "Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house (in Ephesus)." (1 Cor 16:19).

The question arises as to what Luke meant by using the term **disciples**? He normally used this of believers and in fact he says in Acts 19:4 Luke records John was "telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus." So were they Christians? It is difficult to be definitive. We know that certainly by Acts 19:6 they were true believers, disciples of Jesus! (see further comments on this thorny question in notes on Acts 19:2).

**David Williams** comments that "In these early days of the church there were probably any number of cases like this, where a clear distinction could not be drawn between the **disciples** of John and the **disciples** of Jesus." (UBCS-Acts)



**Swindoll** writes these **disciples** were "Christians-in-waiting—Jews who had responded positively to John the Baptist's ministry but who had not yet received a complete articulation of the person and work of Jesus Christ. They had only partial information and had not received the Holy Spirit." (Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary – Acts) (**Ed:** This is an interesting, somewhat enigmatic comment -- I cannot truly discern if Swindoll favors these disciples as genuine believers or not?)

**Polhill** on these **disciples** - Evidently they were not at this point strictly Christian disciples but rather disciples of John the Baptist. (New American Commentary – Volume 26: Acts) (**Ed:** Note again Polhill does not come out and say he believes these "disciples" were believers!)

**Robertson** on **some disciples** - They show no connection with Priscilla and Aquila. Luke calls them "**disciples**" or "learners" ([mathetes](#)) because they were evidently sincere though crude and ignorant. There is no reason at all for connecting these uninformed **disciples of the Baptist** with Apollos. They were floating followers of the Baptist who drifted into Ephesus and whom Paul found. Some of John's disciples clung to him till his death (Jn 3:22–25; Lk 7:19; Mt. 14:12). Some of them left Palestine without the further knowledge of Jesus that came after his death and some did not even know that, as turned out to be the case with the group in Ephesus.

**Toussaint** - Paul's question (v. 2) should read, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" To base a doctrine of "a second blessing" on this verse is wrong. The Spirit comes into our lives when we believe on Christ, not afterward (Eph. 1:13–14). (Bible Knowledge Commentary)

**Constable** - It is difficult to determine whether the "disciples" whom Paul found in Ephesus were Christians or not. They seem quite similar to Apollos (18:25–26) and may have been Old Testament saints or untaught Christians. Another possibility is that they were not believers at all but only seekers after the truth.<sup>762</sup> The second alternative seems more probable to me. Elsewhere Luke used the word "disciple" to describe John's followers (Luke 5:33; 7:18–19). Clearly these men were disciples of John the Baptist, not Jesus.

Luke had used the term **disciples** to describe followers of John the Baptist

"The **disciples** of John often fast and offer prayers, the disciples of the Pharisees also do the same, but Yours eat and drink." used the term disciples (Luke 5:33+)

The **disciples** of John reported to him about all these things. 19 Summoning two of his disciples, John sent them to the Lord, saying, "Are You the Expected One, or do we look for someone else?" 20 When the men came to Him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to You, to ask, 'Are You the Expected One, or do we look for someone else?'" (Luke 7:18-20+).

Furthermore the name **disciples** was used in other contexts - For example the disciples of the Pharisees (Mark 2:18; Luke 5:33), the disciples of John the Baptist (Matt. 9:14; 11:2; Luke 5:33; 7:18-19; 11:1; John 1:35; 3:25) and finally disciples of Jesus Christ were not even saved as they proved when they departed from following Him (see John 6:66).

**John MacArthur** - Those who insist they were already Christians use this passage as a proof text for their view that receiving the Holy Spirit is a subsequent, post-salvation, or 'second blessing,' experience. Such an interpretation, however, is untenable. First, it commits the methodological error of failing to consider the transitional nature of Acts, which means that the experiences and phenomena described in Acts are not normative for today. Second, this is a faulty interpretation because it commits the comparative scriptural error. Other texts make obvious that this passage cannot be used to teach that some Christians today may not have the Holy Spirit. That would declare unequivocally that ever Christian receives the Spirit at salvation, and define those without the Spirit as unsaved. (Acts Commentary)

---

**CITY OF EPHEBUS - ILLUSTRATION OF THE SUBTLE CORRUPTING EFFECT OF SIN:** What happened to the great city of Ephesus? Often mentioned in the New Testament, it was one of the cultural and commercial centers of its day. Located at the mouth of the [Cayster River](#), it was noted for its bustling harbors, its broad avenues, its gymnasiums, its baths, its huge amphitheater, and especially its magnificent Temple of Diana.

What happened to bring about its gradual decline until its harbor was no longer crowded with ships and the city was no longer a flourishing metropolis? Was it smitten by plagues, destroyed by enemies, or demolished by earthquakes? No, silt was the reason for its downfall—silent and non-violent silt. Over the years, fine sedimentary particles slowly filled up the harbor, separating the city from the economic life of the sea traders. Little evil practices, little acts of disobedience may seem harmless. (Song 2:15) But let the silt of sin gradually accumulate, and we will find ourselves far from God. Life will become a spiritual ruin. In the book of Hebrews we are warned of the danger of "the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb 3:13+). James said that the attractive pleasures of sin are really a mask covering death (Jas 1:15+). God forbid that we let the "**silt of sin**" accumulate in our lives!

Christian, walk carefully, danger is near!  
On in your journey with trembling and fear;  
Snares from without and temptations within  
Seek to entice you once more into sin.  
--Anon.

### **Little sins add up to big trouble.**

**Longenecker** has an additional note on the harbor at Ephesus - Ephesus relied upon two important assets for its wealth and vitality. The first was its position as a center of trade, linking the Greco-Roman world with the rich hinterland of western Asia Minor. But because of excessive lumbering, charcoal burning, and overgrazing the land, topsoils slipped into streams, streams were turned into marshes, and storm waters raced to the sea laden with silt that choked the river's mouth. The Pergamum kings promoted the maintenance of the harbor facilities at Ephesus, and Rome followed suit. But it was a losing battle against the unchecked erosion of the hinterland. In Paul's day, the zenith of Ephesus's commercial power was long since past. Deepening economic decline had cast a shadow over the city. Efforts were repeatedly made to improve the harbor (in A.D. 65 a large-scale attempt was undertaken), but they either failed or provided only temporary relief. Domitian at the end of the first century A.D. was the last ruler to attempt to repair the harbor's facilities and enlarge its dwindling capacities. Today the mouth of the Cayster River is so choked with silt that the ancient harbor works of Ephesus sit back behind a swamp, some seven miles from the sea. (Expositor's Bible Commentary – Volume 9: John and Acts) (See [note on reconstruction of the ancient harbor](#) - article in 2017)

---

**Charles Swindoll** gives us some excellent background on the city of Ephesus - EPHEBUS, THE MOTHER OF COMMERCE IN ASIA

Ephesus was a city built of marble. Marble paved the streets, lined the foundations, supported the monuments, and channeled rainwater to the sea. Even the public toilets were constructed from polished marble. The city gleamed with white iridescence, as if to say to the world, "This city will shine forever." And of all the cities in the Roman Empire, Ephesus would have been one of the most difficult places in which to establish an orderly church. The city of Corinth struggled with rampant immorality, and that enemy was easy to spot. But a church in Ephesus also had to be on guard against two insidious killers of congregations: enticing prosperity and distracting philosophy.

This port city sat alongside the Aegean Sea at the mouth of the Cayster River and near the intersection of two important mountain passes. Ephesus, therefore, commanded a strategic position offering access in all directions from the sea, making the city an unusually busy and affluent economic hub for the Roman province of Asia. Materials and knowledge flowed into the city from all over the world, feeding its voracious appetite for more wealth and new ideas.

Ephesus was renowned for its paganism—as many as fifty different gods and goddesses were worshiped there. None, however, challenged the economic and mystical power of the towering temple of Artemis, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Worship of the "earth mother" had become a huge attraction, combining tourism and sensual idolatry with such success that it fueled the city's core economy, even without its already burgeoning import/export trade. City officials set aside one month of every year to honor the goddess with a grand celebration, during which all work ceased. The stadium hosted athletic games, the theater produced plays, the odeum held concerts, and people flocked from every corner of Asia and beyond to make offerings in the sacred grove, the mythical birthplace of Artemis. Worship of the goddess brought such enormous sums of money into the temple that it became an important banking institution, perhaps the first of its kind in Asia. Moreover, the city of Ephesus became a sanctuary for debtors, a place of refuge for anyone seeking to avoid a creditor's demands.

If the lure of money and magic didn't create enough chaos, the city of Ephesus also attracted schools of philosophy. Around 500 BC, Heraclitus, a Greek noble of Ephesus, taught that the universe operates according to a unified ordering principle, which he called the logos, that is, "the word." Later philosophers built upon this theory, claiming that all the laws of physics, mathematics, reason, and even morality can be traced back to an impersonal divine mind. By the time of Paul, Ephesus had become a veritable cauldron of competing philosophies and a celebrated repository of texts on Greek philosophy.

Despite all its temptations and challenges, Ephesus was a perfect location for Paul's base of operations in Asia because "roads from Ephesus radiated in every direction along the coast and through the interior of the province." To ensure that the church would remain morally clean, doctrinally pure, and spiritually vibrant, Paul spent more time in Ephesus than in any other Gentile city. Moreover, he nurtured the congregation from afar,



sending envoys to check on its members' well-being, writing at least one letter, and—perhaps most significant of all—placing them in the hands of his beloved disciple Timothy. (Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary – Acts)

**Acts 19:2 He said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said to him, "No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit."**

NET Acts 19:2 and said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They replied, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."

GNT Acts 19:2 ε π ν τε π ρ ς α το ς, Ε πνε μα γιον λ βετε πιστε σαντες; ο δ π ρ ς α τ ν, λ λ ο δ ε πνε μα γιον στιν κο σαμεν.

NLT Acts 19:2 "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" he asked them. "No," they replied, "we haven't even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."

KJV 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.

ESV Acts 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."

ASV Acts 19:2 and he said unto them, Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed? And they said unto him, Nay, we did not so much as hear whether the Holy Spirit was given.

CSB Acts 19:2 and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" "No," they told him, "we haven't even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."

NIV Acts 19:2 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."

- **Did you receive:** Ac 19:5 2:17,38,39 8:15-17 10:44 11:15-17 Ro 1:11
- **We have not:** 1Sa 3:7 Joh 7:39 1Co 6:19 12:1-11 Ga 3:5
- [Acts 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

At the outset the reader needs to understand that this account is **very difficult to interpret and commentators disagree** as discussed below so it is best to avoid dogmatism. One major point of disagreement is whether these "disciples" were genuine believers. Some like Lenski (Guzik, Pelikan-Brazos Commentary) would say "yes," but others like MacArthur (Steven Cole) would say "No."

**Ajith Fernando** writes that "The debate will continue as to whether or not they were **true believers**. (On the affirmative, see Arrington, Acts, 191; Stronstad, Charismatic Theology of St. Luke, 68–69. On the negative, see Longenecker, "Acts," 493; Stott, Acts, 304). What is significant is that Paul specifically asked them whether they received the Holy Spirit when they believed (19:2). This suggests that people can really know when they receive the Holy Spirit." (NIVAC-Acts)

**He said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"** - This question is somewhat enigmatic, given that we know Acts is a transitional book. However, based on Paul's statement in Romans it is difficult to say that these individuals were truly born again. Paul wrote

However, you are not in the flesh but **in the Spirit**, if indeed **the Spirit of God dwells in you**. But **if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him**. (Ro 8:9<sup>+</sup>)

**COMMENT** - To be sure Paul wrote this after the book of Acts, but it certainly would seem to support the premise that these "disciples" were not yet genuine believers.

**Phillips** has an interesting way to explain Paul's question - These dozen Ephesian converts of John knew little or nothing about the gift of the Holy Spirit, about His baptism and indwelling, or about His sealing ministry or the fact that He is the earnest of our inheritance. They had not been made partakers of the *sovereign* acts of God that are all part of a genuine Christian experience. Consequently they knew nothing, either, of the Holy Spirit's filling and anointing, *subsequent* acts of God that depend upon the believer's cooperation with the Holy Spirit. Thus these men were believers in Christ, to the best of their knowledge of Him, but they were not yet Christians. (Exploring Acts: An Expository Commentary)

**Bruce Barton** - Paul's question to this group of Ephesian men underlines the truth that apart from the Holy Spirit, there is no salvation (Romans 8:9, 16; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 1:13). The Spirit is the one who imparts life (John 3:5). The reply of these men is difficult to interpret. John the Baptist had talked plainly about the coming of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:32–33). Perhaps this answer implies that they were unaware that the time of the Spirit's outpouring had come at last. Whatever the case, like Apollos (18:24–26), these men needed further instruction on the message and ministry of Jesus Christ. They believed in Jesus as the Messiah, but they did not understand the significance of his death and resurrection or the role of the Holy Spirit in the birth and life of the church. Since becoming a Christian involves turning from sin (repentance) and turning to Christ (faith), these "believers" were incomplete. They had repented but had not yet trusted in Christ. In truth, they were believers only in the sense that they were seeking to believe. (LABC-Acts)

**Polhill** - Paul's interrogation of the disciples revealed that at no point had they advanced beyond John the Baptist's initial preaching of repentance in preparation for the coming Messiah. The NIV translation of their reply to Paul's question "Did you receive the Holy Spirit?" (v. 2) is literal, "We have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." John's disciples would surely have been acquainted with the Spirit and especially with his teaching that with the coming of the Messiah the Spirit would be poured out (cf. Luke 3:16). What they would not be aware of, if they had not heard of Jesus' death and resurrection and of the event at Pentecost, was that this proclamation of John had been fulfilled in Christ. Evidently that was the case with this group. They had not heard that the Spirit had been poured out. They were unaware of Pentecost. (NAC-Acts)

**John MacArthur** interprets the response of John's **disciples** as confirming "to the apostle that they were not yet Christians. That they were unacquainted with the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost showed that they were in fact Old Testament saints." (MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Acts)

**John Stott** comments "In a word, they were still living in the Old Testament which culminated with John the Baptist. They understood neither that the new age had been ushered in by Jesus, nor that those who believe in him and are baptized into him receive the distinctive blessing of the new age, the indwelling Spirit."

**David Williams** says that Paul's "criterion for what distinguished the Christian is significant. So, too, is the way in which his question is framed. It implies that the Holy Spirit is received at a definite point in time and that that time is the moment of initial belief (the aorist participle, *pisteusantes*, being construed here as coincidental with the verb, *elabete* = "receive"). The same thought is expressed, for example, in Eph 1:13: "Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit" (cf. Acts 11:17). No space of time is envisaged between the two events; nor is the possibility entertained of believing without also receiving the "seal of the Spirit." ([New International Biblical Commentary: Acts](#))

**Warren Wiersbe** - Paul's question (v. 2) should read, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" To base a doctrine of "a second blessing" on this verse is wrong. The Spirit comes into our lives when we believe on Christ, not afterward (Eph. 1:13–14). (Wiersbe's Expository Outlines - NT)

**John Phillips** comments on how some have misapplied this passage - The popular but false teaching in some quarters is that *believers* must ask God to give them the Holy Spirit. The gift of the Spirit is one of the benefits sovereignly and eternally bestowed upon a believer at the moment of conversion. Romans 8:9 says, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Either one has the Holy Spirit, in which case he belongs to Christ and is saved, or else one does not have the Holy Spirit, in which case he is not saved. It is wrong to ask God to give us something He has already given to us. The *baptism* of the Spirit and the *gift* of the Spirit are interrelated. The baptism puts *me in Christ* (cf 1 Cor 12:13); the gift puts *Christ in me*. The one makes me a member of His mystical Body; the other makes my material body the Holy Spirit's Temple. **It is equally wrong to ask God to give me more of His Spirit.** The Holy Spirit is a Person, and one cannot receive a person by installments. When you accepted Christ as Savior, God gave you the gift of His Holy Spirit. You received that marvelous Person into your life. The Christian life is largely the process of finding out more and more the vastness of the wisdom, the love and the power of the amazing Person who has come to share His life with those who trust Christ as Savior. (Exploring Acts: An Expository Commentary)

**THOUGHT** - We have all of the Holy Spirit we will ever receive the moment we are saved. For the rest of our sojourn on earth, it will be about the Holy Spirit having more and more of me, as I learn to die to self and rely more and more on the fullness of the Spirit. This will be our lifelong "project" and at its core is the essence of progressive sanctification or growth in Christ-likeness (cf 2 Cor 3:18+).

**And they said to him, "No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit."**- Now this is an interesting statement because John the Baptist himself had taught "'As for me, I baptize you with water; but One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to untie the thong of His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." (Lk 3:16+, see also Mt 3:11+; Mk 1:8+; cf. John 1:32-33+) Clearly they had not been at the Feast of Pentecost and thus had not heard that the Spirit had been poured on the believers in Jerusalem!

**Steven Cole** - But since they were **disciples** of John the Baptist, and since John clearly taught that the Messiah would baptize His followers with the Holy Spirit (Lu 3:16+), probably they meant that they had not heard that the Holy Spirit had been given in the sense that John had predicted.....These men believed in the message of John the Baptist, but they had not heard how Jesus had fulfilled John's preaching. Even though Luke calls them "**disciples**" (Acts 19:1), it is clear that **they were not disciples of Jesus**. (COLE AGREES WITH MACARTHUR ABOVE) In a similar way, there are many in evangelical churches today who *believe* in God, and perhaps even *believe* in Jesus in some general sort of way, but who are not truly saved. If you asked them, "Are you a Christian?" they would answer, "Of course I am! I'm not a Hindu or an atheist!" But in spite of their answer, they are not truly saved. How can you tell? One way is to look for signs of spiritual life. We are not told why Paul asked them whether they received the Holy Spirit when they believed, but probably he sensed that something didn't quite seem right. Maybe they didn't understand spiritual truth as he talked about it (1 Cor. 2:14+). Maybe the fruit of the Spirit was not evident in their attitudes and behavior (Gal. 5:22-23+). But Paul sensed something that led him to ask a diagnostic question to determine where these men were really at spiritually: "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" (The KJV translation, "**since** you believed," is in error.) Sometimes you will be talking with someone who **claims to believe in Christ** and who has been in the church for years, but you sense that something isn't right. The two diagnostic questions that Evangelism Explosion uses are excellent tools to determine where the person is at spiritually: "Do you know for sure that when you die you will be with God in heaven?" And, "If God were to ask you, 'Why should I let you into My heaven?' what would you say?" Their answers will reveal what they are trusting in for eternal life. A person must believe that Jesus Christ, who is fully God and fully man, paid the penalty for sin that we deserve when He died on the cross. And that person must personally receive God's gift of eternal life by trusting in what Christ did for him on the cross. **Any trust in human goodness, even if coupled with faith in Christ, reveals that the person does not understand the gospel and has not trusted in Christ alone for salvation.** ([Evangelizing, Empowering, and Equipping Acts 19:1-10](#))

---

**Jack Arnold introduces his sermon on Acts 19** - Every Christian has, or will, come into contact with so-called charismatic Christians who teach that it is possible to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation at one point of one's Christian experience and then, at a later point in one's Christian experience, it is possible to receive the Holy Spirit for sanctification. The people who hold this kind of theology are called Pentecostals, Holiness or Charismatics. They claim that sometime after initial salvation one must have an experience with the Holy Spirit to have power to live the Christian life. This experience after conversion is sometimes referred to as the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the second blessing or the second work of grace, and for most, this experience is accompanied by the manifestation of the charismatic gifts with special emphasis upon the speaking in tongues, which for them are unknown, heavenly languages of praise to God. They believe that this second experience with the Holy Spirit comes when one is fully surrendered and totally yielded to God. It is grossly unfair on my part to try to classify charismatics, for they range all the way from snake handlers to the most dignified and cultured Christians. Among charismatics themselves, there is a wide difference of opinion as to what the Bible teaches on this encounter with the Holy Spirit and the speaking in tongues. Some think that one must speak in tongues to evidence salvation, for it is tongues that proves one has the Holy Spirit. Still others would not go so far but they would say that speaking in tongues is necessary to evidence one is truly Spirit-filled. Still others, who are more biblical, see tongues as just one of the spiritual gifts in the church and some have the gift of tongues and some do not. Charismatics, as a whole, are very difficult to talk to once they have had the so-called tongues experience, for once one has experienced something subjectively, it is difficult to be objective. What we must do with our charismatic brethren is to bring their experience of tongues and their theology surrounding this experience to the touchstone of Scripture. Charismatics, for the most parts are our brothers and sisters in Christ. Our task is not to berate, mock or shun them but to love them and help to examine the Scriptures on tongues so as to get biblical perspective on this subject. Once a charismatic sees what the Bible teaches, then his fanaticism over tongues will leave (even though he may not give up the use of the gift as he understands it) and he will become balanced, more biblical, and more loving and understanding towards the rest of the body of Christ who have not experienced what he thinks is the biblical gift of tongues. ([Saved But Lacking - Acts 19:1-7](#))

**Acts 19:3 And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" And they said, "Into John's baptism."**

NET Acts 19:3 So Paul said, "Into what then were you baptized?" "Into John's baptism," they replied.

GNT Acts 19:3 ε π ν τε, Ε ς τ ο ν βαπτισθητε; ο δ ε παν, Ε ς τ ω ννου β ππισμα.

NLT Acts 19:3 "Then what baptism did you experience?" he asked. And they replied, "The baptism of John."

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

ESV Acts 19:3 And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" They said, "Into John's baptism."

ASV Acts 19:3 And he said, Into what then were ye baptized? And they said, Into John's baptism.

CSB Acts 19:3 "Then what baptism were you baptized with?" he asked them. "With John's baptism," they replied.

NIV Acts 19:3 So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied.

NKJ Acts 19:3 And he said to them, "Into what then were you baptized?" So they said, "Into John's baptism."

NRS Acts 19:3 Then he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" They answered, "Into John's baptism."

YLT Acts 19:3 and he said unto them, 'To what, then, were ye baptized?' and they said, 'To John's baptism.'

- **Into what:** Mt 28:19 1Co 12:13
- **Into John's:** Ac 18:25 Mt 3:1-17 Lu 3:1-38
- [Acts 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## JOHN'S BAPTISM

**And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?"** - "Then what baptism did you experience?" (NLT)

**And they said, "Into John's baptism."** - This simply affirms that they were disciples of John the Baptist, which is fascinating for John had been beheaded almost 25 years earlier. As an aside this is the last mention of John the Baptist in the NT. **John's baptism** was one of preparation for Jesus' coming as Bock describes in more detail below. They had progressed no further than the ministry of John the Baptist. In that sense they were similar to Apollos for Luke had recorded he was "acquainted only with the baptism of John." (Acts 18:25+).

**Swindoll** - Like Apollos, they had responded to the repentance invitation of John the Baptizer (Acts 19:3), and they anticipated the Messiah as John had indicated; but while Apollos had been instructed in "the Way" (Acts 18:25; cf. Acts 9:2), these people knew nothing about Jesus Christ. Whereas Apollos was "teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus" (Acts 18:25) and then was instructed "more accurately" (Acts 18:26), Paul introduced Christ to these disciples for the first time. (Ibid)

**Darrell Bock** on John's **baptism** - John's baptism is unique to him and is grounded in his prophetic office. It is a call to commitment and includes a recognition that God is coming. It is neither the washing of a separated covenant community (Qumran) nor an initiatory rite (Gentile [proselytes](#)). Unlike traditional Judaism, it is not a religious act related to bringing sacrifices. Rather, it is an affirmation, a washing that looks with hope for God's (**Ed**: Messiah's) coming and lives in light of one's relationship to Him (regarding this future looking and living see Bock's note below on meaning of **forgiveness of sins** associated with John's baptism as recorded in Luke 3:3+). This attitude is much like the NT emphasis on a life of faith. [Baker Exegetical Commentary - Luke](#). ([See more detailed explanation in Bock's note below](#)).

**Baptized** (907) ([baptizo](#) from **bapto** = cover wholly with a fluid; stain or dip as with dye; used of the smith tempering the red-hot steel, used of dyeing the hair; of a ship that "dipped" = sank) has a literal and a figurative meaning in the NT. The literal meaning is to submerge, to dip or immerse as in water.

**Baptism** (908) ([baptisma](#) from **bapto** = dip as in dye to color) is the result of the act of dipping, plunging, immersing, washing. something or someone. The suffix **-ma** indicates the result of dipping or sinking or baptizing while **baptismos** is the act of baptizing.

### Related Resource:

- [What are the seven baptisms mentioned in the Bible, and what do they mean?](#)

---

### Question: "What was the meaning and importance of the baptism of John the Baptist?"

**Answer:** Though today the word *baptism* generally evokes thoughts of identifying with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, **baptism** did not begin with Christians. For years before Christ, the Jews had used baptism in ritual cleansing ceremonies of **Gentile proselytes**. John the Baptist took baptism and applied it to the Jews themselves—it wasn't just the Gentiles who needed (SPIRITUAL) cleansing. Many believed John's message and were baptized by him (Matthew 3:5–6+). The baptisms John performed had a specific purpose. In Matthew 3:11+, John the Baptist mentions the purpose of his baptisms: **'I baptize you with water for repentance.'** Paul affirms this in Acts 19:4: **"John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the One coming after him, that is, in Jesus."** John's baptism had to do with repentance—it was a **symbolic** representation of changing one's mind and going a new direction. **"Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River"**

(Matthew 3:6+). Being baptized by John demonstrated a **recognition** of one's sin, a **desire** for spiritual cleansing, and a **commitment** to follow God's law in anticipation of the Messiah's arrival. There were some, like the Pharisees, who came to the Jordan to observe John's ministry but who had no desire to step into the water themselves. John rebuked them sternly: "When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance'" (Matthew 3:7–8+). Even the religious leaders needed to repent of their sin, although they saw no need of it.

[Christian baptism today](#) also symbolizes repentance, cleansing, and commitment, but Jesus has given it a different emphasis. Christian baptism is a mark of one's identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. It is representative of a cleansing that is complete and a commitment that is the natural response of one who has been made new. Jesus' sacrifice on the cross completely washes away our sins, and we are raised to new life empowered by the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 5:17–21; Romans 6:1–11). **With John's baptism, a person repented of sin and was therefore ready to place his faith in Jesus Christ. John's baptism foreshadowed what Jesus would accomplish, much as the Old Testament sacrificial system did (ED: Think of all the OT sacrifices, festivals, Day of Atonement, furnishings in the Tabernacle as like a "Divine Index Finger" pointing the Jews to the coming Messiah). John prepared the way for Christ by calling people to acknowledge their sin and their need for salvation. His baptism was a purification ceremony meant to ready the peoples' hearts to receive their Savior.** (from [Gotquestions.org](#), a trustworthy site for sound doctrine)

---

**Matt Slick has an interesting thought regarding why Jesus received the baptism of John asking 'Have you ever wondered why Jesus was baptized into John's baptism of repentance?**

1. Some say it was to identify with us; there is much truth in that.
2. Others say it was to be an example; there is also much truth there, too.
3. Probably the main reason that Jesus was baptized was because it was at His baptism that He began His ministry and entered into the [Melchizedek priesthood](#) so He could become the High Priest and be the Holy Sacrifice.
  1. Amos 3:7 "Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets."
  2. Exodus 29:1,4-7 "This is what you are to do to consecrate them, so they may serve me as priests:... (after offering a blood sacrifice) 4 Then bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting and wash them with water. 5 Take the garments and dress Aaron with the tunic, the robe of the ephod, the ephod itself and the breast piece. Fasten the ephod on him by its skillfully woven waistband. 6 Put the turban on his head and attach the sacred diadem to the turban. 7 Take the anointing oil and anoint him by pouring it on his head" (NIV).
  3. Numbers 4:3 "Count all the men from thirty to fifty years of age who come to serve in the work in the Tent of Meeting" (NIV).
    1. So Jesus was probably 30 years old when He began His ministry (ED: Lk 3:23+) . ([Carm.org Reference](#))

---

#### Related Resources:

- [Why was Jesus baptized? Why was Jesus' baptism important?](#)
- [Is baptism necessary for salvation?](#)
- [Does 1 Peter 3:21 teach that baptism is necessary for salvation?](#)
- [Does Galatians 3:27 teach that baptism is necessary for salvation?](#)
- [Does the Bible teach believer's baptism/credobaptism?](#)
- [Does John 3:5 teach that baptism is necessary for salvation?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about infant baptism / paedobaptism?](#)
- [Does Mark 16:16 teach that baptism is necessary for salvation?](#)

**Acts 19:4 Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus."**

NET Acts 19:4 Paul said, "John baptized with a baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, in Jesus."

GNT Acts 19:4 ε πεν δ Πα λος, ω ννης β ππισεν β ππισμα μετανο ας τ λα λ γων ε ς τ ν ρχ μενον μετ α τ ν να πιστε σωσιν, το τ σιν ε ς τ ν ησο ν.

NLT Acts 19:4 Paul said, "John's baptism called for repentance from sin. But John himself told the people to



believe in the one who would come later, meaning Jesus."

KJV 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.

ESV Acts 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."

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

CSB Acts 19:4 Paul said, "John baptized with a baptism of repentance, telling the people that they should believe in the One who would come after him, that is, in Jesus."

NIV Acts 19:4 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."

NKJ Acts 19:4 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."

NRS Acts 19:4 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, in Jesus."

YLT Acts 19:4 And Paul said, 'John, indeed, did baptize with a baptism of reformation, saying to the people that in him who is coming after him they should believe -- that is, in the Christ -- Jesus;'

- **John baptized:** Ac 1:5 Acts 11:16 Acts 13:23-25 Mt 3:11,12 11:3-5 21:25-32 Mk 1:1-12 Lu 1:76-79 3:16-18 Joh 1:15,27,29-34 3:28-36 5:33-35
- [Acts 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## JOHN'S BAPTISM OF REPENTANCE

**Luke** has mentioned the baptism of John three times in earlier chapters...

Acts 1:5+ for **John baptized with water**, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

Acts 11:16+ "And I remembered the word of the Lord, how He used to say, **John baptized with water**, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'

Acts 13:23-25+ "From the descendants of this man, according to promise, God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, 24 after John had proclaimed before His coming a **baptism of repentance** to all the people of Israel. 25 "And while John was completing his course, he kept saying, 'What do you suppose that I am? I am not He. But behold, one is coming after me the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie.'

**Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance** - As noted John's baptism was as a forerunner to prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah. John's "baptism" was like an index finger pointing to the coming of Messiah. Luke records that John was "To give to His people the knowledge of salvation By the forgiveness of their sins." (Lk 1:77+).

**Repentance** (3341)([metanoia](#) from **meta** = after + **noéo** = to understand) literally means "afterthought" or "to think after" and implies a change of mind. From the NT uses, it is clear that **metanoia** means much more than merely a change of mind but also includes a complete change of heart attitude and a result a full "about face" change in direction of one's life. This is Mark's only use of metanoia, but he has 2 uses of the verb [metanoëo](#) (Mk 1:15+, Mk 6:12+).

While John's baptism of repentance does not necessarily indicate that all who were baptized also genuinely believed in the Messiah, clearly **metanoia** is part of conversion for Jesus' teaches

I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who **repents** ([metanoëo](#)), than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no **repentance** (metanoia). (Luke 15:7+)

**Bishop Ryle** offers this descriptive definition of repentance - **Repentance** is a thorough change of man's natural heart, upon the subject of sin. We are all born in sin. We naturally love sin. We take to sin, as soon as we can act and think—just as the bird takes to flying, and the fish takes to swimming. There never was a child that required schooling or education in order to learn



deceitfulness, selfishness, passion, self-will, gluttony, pride, and foolishness. These things are not picked up from bad companions, or gradually learned by a long course of tedious instruction. They spring up of themselves, even when boys and girls are brought up alone. The seeds of them are evidently the natural product of the heart. The aptitude of all children to these evil things is an unanswerable proof of the corruption and fall of man. Now when this heart of ours is changed by the Holy Spirit, when this natural love of sin is cast out, then takes place that change which the Word of God calls "**repentance**." The man in whom the change is wrought is said to "repent." ([Repentance](#))

One of the best illustrations of **genuine repentance** is found in Paul's description of the saints at Thessalonica...

For they themselves (other believers in Macedonia and Achaia) report about us (Paul, Silvanus and Timothy) what kind of a reception we had with you, and **how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven**, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come. (1 Thessalonians 1:9; 1:10-See [notes 1Th 1:9; 1:10](#))

**In Acts 20:21+** Paul declares that he was "solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of **repentance** toward God and **faith** in our Lord Jesus Christ.

**C H Spurgeon** wrote that "**Repentance** and **faith** must go together to complete each other. I compare them to a door and its post. Repentance is the door which shuts out sin, but faith is the post on which its hinges are fixed. A door without a doorpost to hang on is not a door at all, while a doorpost without the door hanging on it is of no value whatever. What God hath joined together let no man put asunder, and these two he has made inseparable—repentance and faith)

**J C Ryle** wrote... There can be no true **repentance** without **faith**. You may cast away your old habits, as the serpent casts off his skin—but if you are not resting all upon the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, and looking to be saved by simple faith in Him, you may be wise in your own eyes—but you are just ignorant of the root and fountain, the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last, in all true gospel religion. You may tell us you have repented—but if you have not at the same time laid hold on Christ, you have hitherto received the grace of God in vain.

#### **Related Resource:**

- [Great quotes on repentance primarily from Puritan writers](#)

**Telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus-** Apparently these "about 12" men believed on Jesus at some point in time, possibly after hearing Paul's words, but one cannot be dogmatic. In any event Paul's subsequent action of baptizing them indicates that he accepted them as genuine born again believers. As [MacArthur says below](#) a few of those that received John's baptism for repentance were in fact true believers in the Messiah.

#### **Darrell Bock** helps us understand John's **baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins** -

The final characteristic mentioned about this baptism is its goal. It is directed *toward*, (eis, for), the **forgiveness of sins**. This statement could be read to suggest that some type of total forgiveness and efficacy is found in John's baptism that makes the experience one of "becoming saved." However, this understanding reads back more into the event than the time of the event and the presentation of Luke will allow. John is a preparatory figure (Lk 1:17+ = "*It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.*", Luke 1:76–77+; Schürmann 1969: 154–57). He prepares a people for God. Most importantly, John says that his baptism is nothing compared to the baptism that the Mightier One brings (Lk 3:16+) . **So John's baptism is a prophetic eschatological washing; that is, it is a baptism of promise that looks to the greater baptism of the Spirit** (Schürmann 1969: 158–60). **It points forward to the cleansing that comes to those who respond to Messiah's offer with faith. This association of Spirit and cleansing was mentioned in the OT** (Ezek. 36:25–27+; Zech. 13:1+). The washing in the Jordan adds symbolism, picturing either repentance (Isa. 1:16–17<sup>+</sup>; Jer. 4:14) or divine cleansing (Ps. 51:7–9<sup>+</sup>; Isa. 4:2–6<sup>+</sup>; Ezek. 37:23+; Jer. 33:8-note) or, perhaps, both (Nolland 1989: 141). If there be any doubt that Luke understands John in this prophetic and eschatological fashion, a glance at Acts 19:1–10+ ends any such uncertainty. Disciples who know only of John are to accept immediately the baptism tied to Jesus. Acts 19:4+ makes it clear that John's baptism is not complete in itself, but points to faith in Jesus (also Acts 13:24+). Thus, John's baptism represented for its precross Israelite audience a commitment to a new approach to God resulting in a life of fruitfulness for God and expectation of the eschaton....**In short, John's baptism was a step on the way to the Promised One's forgiveness. The**

repentance in view here will not only make one alter the way one lives, but also will cause one to see “the Mightier One to come” as the promise of God. To submit to this baptism is to confess one’s commitment to this perspective. This is the essence of John’s baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ([Baker Exegetical Commentary-Luke](#))

**John MacArthur** adds that “while there were various ceremonial washings in Judaism (cf. Heb. 6:2+), there was no baptism of Jews. But while there was no baptism of Jews in Judaism, the Jews did baptize Gentile converts to Judaism (Gentile [proselytes](#)). Thus, those who “were being baptized by [John] in the Jordan River, as they confessed their sins” (Mt. 3:6), were publicly acknowledging that they were no better than the Gentiles. Their sins had separated them from the true and living God (cf. Isa 59:2) and cut them off from covenant blessings. For Jewish people to place themselves on the same level as the despised Gentiles was astonishing, and demonstrates the power of John’s preaching. **Unfortunately, few being baptized by John were truly repentant.** The nation would later reject Jesus when He failed to meet their expectations of a political Messiah, who would deliver them from the Romans. Others were superficial from the start....**But those few (Mt 7:13–14+) who acknowledged their sinful condition and alienation from God and turned to Him in repentant faith were saved.** ([Luke Commentary](#))

**What was John the Baptist promising his followers when he baptized them?** John the Baptist was the forerunner of our Lord. As the last and greatest of the Old Testament prophets, he was announcing that the Messiah promised in the Old Testament was soon coming (Mt 3:2). Until Jesus’ baptism, he did not know for certain that, indeed, Jesus was this Messiah. **John’s baptism** was a baptism of repentance, an acknowledgement of sin, and of the need for the forgiveness of sins which Messiah (the “Lamb of God”) would bring about. The baptism was the symbol of their acknowledgement of sin, and of their need for a Savior. It was a preparatory baptism, but (as we see in Acts 19) it did not preclude the need for “believer’s baptism,” once they had come to faith in Jesus as that promised Messiah. This is why the church baptized new believers, and why believers today should be baptized as well. ([Bible.org](#))

**John Martin** - John’s **baptism** was associated with repentance, that is, it outwardly pictured an inner change of heart. The word “for” (eis) refers back to the whole “**baptism of repentance.**” The baptism did not save anyone, as is clear from what follows (Lk 3:7–14+). Repentance was “**unto**” (literal rendering of eis) or resulted in sins forgiven. Since John’s function was to be Christ’s forerunner, so also his baptism prefigured a different baptism (Luke 3:16+) ([Bible Knowledge Commentary - Luke](#))

#### Acts 19:5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus

NET Acts 19:5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus,

GNT Acts 19:5 κο σαντες δ βαπτ σθησαν ες τ νομα το κυρ ου ησο ,

NLT Acts 19:5 As soon as they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

KJV Acts 19:5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

ESV Acts 19:5 On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

ASV Acts 19:5 And when they heard this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.

CSB Acts 19:5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

NIV Acts 19:5 On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.

NKJ Acts 19:5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

NRS Acts 19:5 On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

YLT Acts 19:5 and they, having heard, were baptized -- to the name of the Lord Jesus,

- **they:** Ac 2:38 8:12,16 Ro 6:3,4 1Co 1:13-15 10:2
- [Acts 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### IMMEDIATE OBEDIENCE

Their obedience begs the question if you are a genuine believer and have not been baptized, then "WHY NOT?" It is your opportunity to testify to the saving grace of Jesus in your life and it may spur some unbelievers to seek the Savior!

**When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus** - Notice that Paul did not tell them how to receive the

Holy Spirit. Their baptism recalls Peter's first charge to the Jews at Pentecost to "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." It also parallels the account of the Samaritans "when they (Samaritans) believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike." (Acts 8:12) And as described in Acts 19:6 these 12 had a similar experience with the Holy Spirit, giving tangible evidence that they had indeed received the Spirit, just as

**MacArthur** says that "had these twelve already believed in Jesus Christ, they would have been baptized into His name." (Ibid)

**Toussaint** - This is the only place in the New Testament that refers to anyone being rebaptized. Quite clearly, John's ministry was anticipatory; Christ is the fulfillment of all things. (Bible Knowledge Commentary)

**Robertson on in the name of the Lord Jesus**- Proper understanding of "Jesus" involved all the rest including the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). Luke does not give a formula, but simply explains that now these men had a proper object of faith (Jesus) and were now really baptized.

### Acts 19:6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking with tongues and prophesying

NET Acts 19:6 and when Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they began to speak in tongues and to prophesy.

GNT Acts 19:6 καὶ πειθεὶς αὐτοὺς τὸ Παῦλος [τῷ] ἡρώδῃ λαβὼν τὸ πνεῦμα τῶν υἱῶν πᾶσι, ἠλλουν τε γλῶσσαις καὶ προφητεῖον.

NLT Acts 19:6 Then when Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in other tongues and prophesied.

KJV 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.

ESV Acts 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.

ASV Acts 19:6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

CSB Acts 19:6 And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began to speak in other languages and to prophesy.

NIV Acts 19:6 When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.

NKJ Acts 19:6 And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.

NRS Acts 19:6 When Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied--

YLT Acts 19:6 and Paul having laid on them his hands, the Holy Spirit came upon them, they were speaking also with tongues, and prophesying,

- **laid:** Ac 6:6 8:17-19 9:17 1Ti 5:22 2Ti 1:6
- **the Holy Spirit:** Ac 2:4 10:45,46 13:2 1Co 12:8-11,28-30
- **and prophesied:** 1Co 14:1-25
- [Acts 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them**- Compare the similar evidence of reception of the Holy Spirit when (1) the **Samaritans** believed (read Acts 8:15-17+, especially "Then they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit.") and (2) when the **Gentiles** in Cornelius' household believed (read Acts 11:15-18+)

There were also spiritual results associated with **Ananias** laying his hands on **Saul** (Paul) at his conversion...

So Ananias departed and entered the house, and **after laying his hands on him** said, "Brother Saul, the Lord

Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and **be filled with the Holy Spirit.**" And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and **he regained his sight**, and he got up and was baptized; (Acts 9:17-18+)

**Marshall on laid hands upon** - It seems more likely that the laying on of hands should be understood as a special act of fellowship, incorporating the people concerned into the fellowship of the church. This was necessary in the case of the Samaritan converts in chapter 8 to make it quite clear that they were accepted fully into the Jewish church centred on Jerusalem; and it was necessary in the present instance to make it clear to these members of a semi-Christian group that they were now becoming part of the universal church. The fact that the story demonstrates that Paul had the same authority as Peter and John to convey the gift of the Spirit is probably merely a secondary motif. The effect of the baptism was to produce 'charismatic' manifestations of the Spirit (Acts 2:4, 17f+.; Acts 10.46+). It is clear from the other stories of conversion in Acts that such manifestations took place spasmodically and were not the general rule (Acts 8:17+; Acts 8:39+; Acts 13:52+; Acts 16:34+); in the present case some unusual gift was perhaps needed to convince this group of 'semi-Christians' that they were now fully members of Christ's church. (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries – Acts)

**And they began speaking with tongues and prophesying** - This was verification that they had received the Holy Spirit.

**A T Robertson on prophesying** - Inchoative imperfect again, began to prophesy. The speaking with tongues and prophesying was external and indubitable proof that the Holy Spirit had come on these twelve uninformed disciples now fully won to the service of Jesus as Messiah. But this baptism in water did not "convey" the Holy Spirit nor forgiveness of sins. Paul was not a sacramentalist

As **Kent Hughes** says "This was a mini-Pentecost. We see the Pentecost experience four times in the book of Acts: to Jewish believers in Jerusalem, to the Samaritans through Philip, to the Gentiles by Peter, and here to dispersed Jews through Paul." (Preaching the Word - Acts)

**Stanley Toussaint** - The subject of tongues in Acts confirms Paul's statement that tongues "are a sign... for unbelievers" (cf. 1 Cor. 14:22). The purpose of tongues was to overcome unbelief. It should also be noted that the reception of the Holy Spirit in Acts does not follow any set pattern. He came into believers before baptism (Acts 10:44), at the time of or after baptism (Acts 8:12-16; 19:6), and by the laying on of apostolic hands (Acts 8:17; 19:6). Yet Paul declared (Ro 8:9) that anyone without the Holy Spirit is not a Christian. Quite obviously the transitional Book of Acts is not to be used as a doctrinal source on how to receive the Holy Spirit (cf. comments on tongues, 1 Cor. 13:8-14:25). (Bible Knowledge Commentary)

SPEAKING IN TONGUES IN THE BOOK OF ACTS				
Passage	Tongues-Speakers	Audience	Related to Salvation	Purpose
Acts 2:1-4	The 12 Apostles and others	Unsaved Jews	After salvation	To validate (for Jews) the fulfillment of Joel 2
Acts 10:44-47	Gentiles (Cornelius and his household)	Saved Jews (Peter and others) who doubted God's plan	The same time as salvation	To validate (for Jews) God's acceptance of Gentiles
Acts 19:1-7	About 12 Old Testament believers	Jews who needed confirmation of the message	The same time as salvation	To validate (for Jews) Paul's message
Source: Stanley Toussaint - BKC				

#### Related Resources:

- [Laying on of hands - what does the Bible say?](#)
- [What is the gift of speaking in tongues?](#)
- [What is the spiritual gift of interpreting tongues?](#)

- [What does it mean that tongues will cease?](#)
- [Is speaking in tongues evidence for having the Holy Spirit?](#)
- [What is the gift of speaking in tongues?](#)

## Acts 19:7 There were in all about twelve men

NET Acts 19:7 (Now there were about twelve men in all.)

GNT Acts 19:7 σαν ὁ οὐ πντες νδρες σε ὁ δεκα.

NLT Acts 19:7 There were about twelve men in all.

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

ESV Acts 19:7 There were about twelve men in all.

ASV Acts 19:7 And they were in all about twelve men.

CSB Acts 19:7 Now there were about 12 men in all.

NIV Acts 19:7 There were about twelve men in all.

NKJ Acts 19:7 Now the men were about twelve in all.

NRS Acts 19:7 altogether there were about twelve of them.

YLT Acts 19:7 and all the men were, as it were, twelve.

- [Acts 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**There were in all about twelve men** - It seems strange that Luke a doctor is not exact, saying there were "about 12." "The reference to **12 men** does not imply, as some have suggested, that the church is the new Israel." (Toussaint)

**MacArthur** comments that "These twelve men, like Paul and Apollos before them, illustrate the transitional nature of Acts. The church, which had embraced Jews, Gentiles, and Samaritans, now gathered in the last group: Old Testament saints. And the same miraculous gifts were present, so that all would know what was said of the Gentiles in Acts 11:17-18. So all the groups were gathered in. And in each case apostles were present to verify that all received the same Holy Spirit in the same way. That having been completed, Paul could write to the Ephesians, "There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph. 4:4-5). From then on, the Holy Spirit would come to every heart at salvation, as the epistles teach.

## Acts 19:8 And he entered the synagogue and continued speaking out boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God

NET Acts 19:8 So Paul entered the synagogue and spoke out fearlessly for three months, addressing and convincing them about the kingdom of God.

GNT Acts 19:8 Εσελθ ν δ ες τ ν συναγωγ ν παρρησι ζετο π μνας τρε ς διαλεγ μενος κα πεθων [τ ] περ τ ς βασιλε ας το θεο .

NLT Acts 19:8 Then Paul went to the synagogue and preached boldly for the next three months, arguing persuasively about the Kingdom of God.

KJV 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.

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

ASV Acts 19:8 And he entered into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, reasoning and persuading as to the things concerning the kingdom of God.

CSB Acts 19:8 Then he entered the synagogue and spoke boldly over a period of three months, engaging in

discussion and trying to persuade them about the things of the kingdom of God.

NIV Acts 19:8 Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God.

NKJ Acts 19:8 And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God.

NRS Acts 19:8 He entered the synagogue and for three months spoke out boldly, and argued persuasively about the kingdom of God.

YLT Acts 19:8 And having gone into the synagogue, he was speaking boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading the things concerning the reign of God,

- **And he entered the synagogue and continued speaking out boldly-** Ac 13:14,46 14:1 26:22,23
- **Reasoning and persuading them:** Ac 19:9 1:3 9:20-22 17:1-3,17 18:4,19 28:23 Jude 1:3
- [Acts 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PAUL'S FEARLESS PRESENTATION OF THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

Every **kingdom** has a king, so ultimately Paul was proclaiming Jesus the King of the Jews (Mt 2:2, Mt 27:11, 37, Lk 23:38+).

**And he entered the synagogue** ([sunagoge](#)) - Paul's pattern for proclamation of Christ crucified was to the Jew first (Ro 1:16). It is interesting in view of subsequent antagonism (Acts 19:9), that this was presumably the same synagogue in which he had **reasoned** ([dialegomai](#)) **with the Jews** in Acts 18:19+, the Jews asking him **"to stay for a longer time."** So to some degree, they were "open" given the fact that Paul stayed 3 months. Now it looks like many in the synagogue feel that 3 months is long enough!

**And continued speaking out boldly for three months** - **Speaking out boldly** is a clear indication that Paul continued to be filled with Holy Spirit (at his conversion Acts 9:17, cf Acts 4:31+, cf Acts 4:13+ where confidence = [parrhesia](#) and to the very end - Acts 28:31+). The [imperfect tense](#) pictures Paul speaking out boldly this over and over, again and again. He was not shy about the Gospel! And three months in a synagogue without a riot is something of a record for Paul!

**Speaking out boldly** (3955) ([parrhesiazomai](#) from [parrhesia](#) = freedom or frankness in speaking or confident in spirit and demeanor <> **pas** = all + **rhesis** = speech) means literally all speech and conveys the idea of freedom to say all and thus to speak freely, openly, boldly, fearlessly, without constraint. The Greeks used this word for speaking in a democratic assembly. It means to be bold and courageous in one's speech reflecting an attitude of openness that comes from freedom and lack of fear even in the face of opposition (see next verse!) The same verb is used in Acts 18:26+ describing Apollos "he began to speak out boldly in the synagogue," which I find fascinating as Apollos did not yet understand that the Spirit of Christ had come.

**Reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God** - Both verbs in the [present tense](#) indicating he was continually reasoning and persuading the Jews about the Kingdom of God, as Jesus had done declaring "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." (Mk 1:15). And of course Jesus' classic words to the Jewish teacher Nicodemus about how to enter the Kingdom...

Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the **kingdom of God.**" 4 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?" 5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the **kingdom of God.**" (John 3:3-5)

**Reasoning** (discussing, dialoguing) (1256) ([dialegomai](#) from **diá** = denoting transition or separation + **légo** = speak; English = [dialogue](#); noun derived = **dialektos** = speaking a specific language of a country) means to engage in an interchange of speech. It means to think different things with oneself, to mingle thought with thought and so to ponder or revolve in one's mind. To reason as one might do using thoughtful arguments to persuade another. To carry on a reasoned discussion as Paul did with the Jews (interestingly each time in the synagogue) in Thessalonica (Acts 17:2), in Athens (Acts 17:17), In Corinth (Acts 18:4) and in Ephesus (Acts 18:19). Some sources even consider **dialegomai** to be a technical term for Paul's teaching in the synagogues. **Dialegomai** is used repeatedly to describe Paul's "modus operandi" in presenting the Gospel - Acts 17:2; Acts 17:17; Acts 18:4; Acts 18:19; Acts 19:8; Acts 19:9; Acts 20:7; Acts 20:9; Acts 24:12; Acts 24:25

**Persuade** ([present tense](#) - continually) (3982) ([peitho](#)) in this context conveys the sense that Paul was seeking to bring his Jewish audience to come to a **settled persuasion** concerning the fact that Jesus was the Messiah



Who had brought full and final atonement for the sins of any of his hearers who would believe in His death, burial and resurrection. Paul was seeking to convince them to put their confidence in Jesus. **Peitho** in Acts - Acts 5:36; Acts 5:37; Acts 5:40; Acts 12:20; Acts 13:43; Acts 14:19; Acts 17:4; Acts 18:4; Acts 19:8; Acts 19:26; Acts 21:14; Acts 23:21; Acts 26:26; Acts 26:28; Acts 27:11; Acts 28:23; Acts 28:24

Attempting to **persuade** the Jews was Paul's [modus operandi](#) until the very end of his life, explaining why he could honestly say "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith;" (2 Ti 4:7+). And so in his quarters in Rome he kept seeking to **persuade**...

When they had set a day for Paul, they came to him at his lodging in large numbers; and he was explaining to them by solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God and trying to persuade ([peitho](#)) them concerning Jesus, from both the Law of Moses and from the Prophets, from morning until evening. Some were being persuaded ([peitho](#)) by the things spoken, but others would not believe (NOTE THAT PERSUADED IN THIS CONTEXT = BELIEF).... 30 And he stayed two full years in his own rented quarters and was welcoming all who came to him, 31 preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered.(Acts 28:23, 24, 30, 31+)

**Kingdom** (932)([basileia](#) from **basileus** = a sovereign, king, monarch) denotes sovereignty, royal power, dominion.

**Kingdom of God** - 66x in 65v in the NT Matt. 12:28; Matt. 19:24; Matt. 21:31; Matt. 21:43; Mk. 1:15; Mk. 4:11; Mk. 4:26; Mk. 4:30; Mk. 9:1; Mk. 9:47; Mk. 10:14; Mk. 10:15; Mk. 10:23; Mk. 10:24; Mk. 10:25; Mk. 12:34; Mk. 14:25; Mk. 15:43; Lk. 4:43; Lk. 6:20; Lk. 7:28; Lk. 8:1; Lk. 8:10; Lk. 9:2; Lk. 9:11; Lk. 9:27; Lk. 9:60; Lk. 9:62; Lk. 10:9; Lk. 10:11; Lk. 11:20; Lk. 13:18; Lk. 13:20; Lk. 13:28; Lk. 13:29; Lk. 14:15; Lk. 16:16; Lk. 17:20; Lk. 17:21; Lk. 18:16; Lk. 18:17; Lk. 18:24; Lk. 18:25; Lk. 18:29; Lk. 19:11; Lk. 21:31; Lk. 22:16; Lk. 22:18; Lk. 23:51; Jn. 3:3; Jn. 3:5; Acts 1:3; Acts 8:12; Acts 14:22; Acts 19:8; Acts 28:23; Acts 28:31; Rom. 14:17; 1 Co. 4:20; 1 Co. 6:9; 1 Co. 6:10; 1 Co. 15:50; Gal. 5:21; Col. 4:11; 2 Thess. 1:5

**MacArthur** comments on **kingdom of God** - Preaching the **kingdom of God** encompasses more than the eschatological thousand-year reign of Christ on the earth (ED: See my note below). To teach the **kingdom of God** is to teach the things concerning Christ and salvation (cf. Acts 28:31) and righteousness (Rom. 14:17). It is to teach how to enter the sphere of salvation and live there in communion with God. (MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Acts)

Jesus will one day return as King of kings to set up His [Messianic Kingdom](#) for 1000 years. In some of Jesus' last words on earth He thought the Kingdom such an important topic for His 11 disciples to grasp that He was "speaking of the things concerning the **kingdom of God**." (Acts 1:3+). In fact they were so thrilled with His teaching on the Kingdom that they ask "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority." (Acts 1:6-7+) Notice that Jesus did not deny He was going to restore the Kingdom, but that clearly now was not the time for that question.

**NET Note on Kingdom of God** - To talk about Jesus as the Christ who has come is to talk about the kingdom of God. This is yet another summary of the message like that in Acts 18:28+.

#### Related Resources:

- See [in depth comments](#) on Lk 17:20-21 on what constitutes the **Kingdom of God**
- [What is the kingdom of God?](#)
- [What did Jesus mean when He said, "The kingdom of God is within you" \(Luke 17:21, KJV\)?](#)
- [What is the difference between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven?](#)
- [Luke 17:20-37 The Present and Future Kingdom](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 17:20-21 The Invisible Kingdom of God, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 17:20-21 The Invisible Kingdom of God, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur

PAUL'S PATTERN: TO THE JEW FIRST	
LOCATION	REFERENCE

1. Damascus	1. Acts 9:20+
2. Jerusalem	2. Acts 9:28-29+
3. Salamis	3. Acts 13:5+
4. Pisidian Antioch	4. Acts 13:14+
5. Iconium	5. Acts 14:1+
6. Philippi	6. Acts 16:13+
7. Thessalonica	7. Acts 17:1-2+
8. Berea	8. Acts 17:10+
9. Athens	9. Acts 17:16-17+
10. Corinth	10. Acts 18:1-4+
11. Ephesus	11. Acts 18:19; 19:8+
12. Rome	12. Acts 28:17+

**Acts 19:9 But when some were becoming hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the people, he withdrew from them and took away the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus**

NET Acts 19:9 But when some were stubborn and refused to believe, reviling the Way before the congregation, he left them and took the disciples with him, addressing them every day in the lecture hall of Tyrannus.

GNT Acts 19:9 ὅτι οἱ τινες σκληρὸν ἔχοντες καὶ πεθεῖν κακολογούντες τὸν θεὸν ἐν πλείοσι τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, ὁ ἀφ᾽ αὐτῶν φρίσεν τοὺς μαθητὰς καὶ μὴ ῥάν διαλεγόμενος ἐν τῷ σχολῷ τοῦ Τυρράνου.

NLT Acts 19:9 But some became stubborn, rejecting his message and publicly speaking against the Way. So Paul left the synagogue and took the believers with him. Then he held daily discussions at the lecture hall of Tyrannus.

KJV 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.

ESV Acts 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.

ASV Acts 19:9 But when some were hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus.

CSB Acts 19:9 But when some became hardened and would not believe, slandering the Way in front of the crowd, he withdrew from them and met separately with the disciples, conducting discussions every day in the lecture hall of Tyrannus.

NIV Acts 19:9 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.

NKJ Acts 19:9 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.

NRS Acts 19:9 When some stubbornly refused to believe and spoke evil of the Way before the congregation, he left them, taking the disciples with him, and argued daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus.

YLT Acts 19:9 and when certain were hardened and were disbelieving, speaking evil of the way before the multitude, having departed from them, he did separate the disciples, every day reasoning in the school of a certain Tyrannus.

- **Some were becoming hardened** Ac 7:51 13:45,46 18:6 2Ki 17:14 2Ch 30:8 36:16 Ne 9:16,17,29 Ps 95:8 Isa 8:14 Jer 7:26 19:15 Joh 12:40 Ro 9:18 11:7 Heb 3:13
- **speaking evil of the Way before the people** Ac 19:23 9:2 22:4 24:21 28:22 2Ti 1:15 2Pe 2:2,12 Jude 1:10
- **he withdrew from them and took away the disciples:** Ac 14:4 17:4 18:7,8 Mt 15:14 16:4 Lu 12:51-53 1Ti 6:5 2Ti 3:5

- **reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus:** Ac 20:31 Pr 8:34 Mt 26:55 2Ti 4:2
- [Acts 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

A Physical Picture of the Spiritual Problem of the Jews

## SPIRITUAL ARTERIOSCLEROSIS

**But when** - Term of contrast. The "honeymoon" was over so to speak! Paul's peerless proclamation demolished any and all Jewish arguments and/or refutations. So the contrast marks a "change of direction" so to speak. The attitude had been we wish to hear more to we wish to hear NO more! Intellectually, they undoubtedly understood what Paul was saying about Jesus, but like those who crucified Him, their hearts were hard and unwilling to welcome Him as their Savior and Lord. How often when I am sharing the Gospel and I come to Jesus as the ONLY way to Heaven, and you can see them sometimes literally back away from you! Others start to look at their watch and say it is time to go. And so Paul had clearly struck that nerve with the Jews loyally bound to their legalistic understanding of how a man becomes righteous. And it was time for him to go!

**Some were becoming hardened and disobedient** - Both verbs are in the [imperfect tense](#) indicating every time Paul would bring forth his reasonable, persuasive Gospel dialogue, the Jews would respond with hardening and disobedience. Thus it was a process occurring over the 3 months he was in the Synagogue. The same sun that melts wax hardens clay. The problem is not with the sun, but with the receptivity of the agent it is acting upon."

**THOUGHT** - As an aside remember that hardening of the heart ages more people than does hardening of the arteries! The same sun that melts the ice (or wax), hardens the clay.

**D L Moody** - DO you know that the gospel of Jesus Christ proves either a savor of life unto life, or of death unto death? You sometimes hear people say: "We will go and hear this man preach. If it does us no good, it will do us no harm." Don't you believe it! **Every time one hears the gospel and rejects it, the hardening process goes on. The same sun that melts the ice hardens the clay.** The sermon that would have moved to action a few years ago makes no impression now. There is not a true minister of the gospel who will not say that the hardest people to reach are those who have been impressed, and whose impressions have worn away. It is a good deal easier to commit a sin the second time than it was to commit it the first time, but it is a good deal harder to repent the second time than the first.

**Vance Havner** - The same sun that melts ice also hardens clay and the Gospel either humbles or hardens the human heart, so a preacher should be prepared to expect both.

**Were becoming hardened** (4645) ([skleruno](#) from **skleros** = dry, hard, rough) means to make dry, stiff then hard. In passive voice as in this passage, skleruno means to be hardened, to grow calloused, to reach a point when one stubbornly refuses to change their attitude, in this case their attitude to the Messiah! And so figuratively these Jews were becoming unyielding, obstinate and stubborn. **Skleruno** was a medical technical term (Hippocrates) in Greek writings describing something becoming hardened. Our English word **hardening** of the arteries is related to this Greek word and is called [arteriosclerosis](#) which is a serious, potentially fatal affliction, especially when it affects the coronary arteries, including the left anterior descending which is nicknamed the "artery of sudden death!" So here in the Jewish synagogue in Ephesus these Jews were not in great peril, for literal hardening leads only to temporal physical death, but spiritual hardening leads to eternal spiritual death and damnation of one's soul!

**Skleruno** - 6v - Acts 19:9; Ro 9:18; Heb. 3:8; Heb. 3:13; Heb. 3:15; Heb. 4:7

The writer of Hebrews uses **skleruno** to repeatedly warn his Jewish readers **"Do not harden your hearts"** (Heb. 3:8<sup>+</sup>; Heb. 3:15<sup>+</sup>; Heb. 4:7<sup>+</sup>) The writer also explains that sin has a hardening effect and so they are to "encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you **will be hardened** (skleruno) by the **deceitfulness** ([apate](#)) of sin." (Heb. 3:13<sup>+</sup>)

**Robertson** on **hardened** - [imperfect](#) passive of sklērūnō, causative like hiphil in Hebrew, to make hard (sklēros) or rough or harsh (Matthew 25:24). In LXX and Hippocrates and Galen (in medical writings). In N.T. only here and Romans 9:18 and 4 times in Hebrews 3:8, 13, 15; Hebrews 4:7-8 quoting and referring to Psalm 95:8 about hardening the heart like a [gristle](#). The inevitable reaction against Paul (**ED**: REALLY AGAINST HIS GOSPEL) went on even in Ephesus though slowly.

**MacArthur** on the hardening effect of rejecting truth - When the truth is rejected repeatedly, it hardens the heart, and the message

of salvation becomes an "aroma from death to death" (2 Cor. 2:16). Their refusing to repent and believe the gospel is classified as being disobedient, since belief is a divine command (Acts 17:30; cf. Mark 1:15 where Jesus declared that "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; **repent** ([present imperative](#)) and **believe** ([present imperative](#)) in the Gospel."). (Ibid)

**And disobedient** (544) (**apeitheo** from **a** = without + **peitho** = persuade) literally describes one who refuses to be persuaded and who **disbelieves** willfully and perversely. In studying **apeitheo** it is important to understand that "the stem **peith-** (pith-, poith-) has the basic meaning of trust (cf. Latin fido, fides). **Apeitheo** means not to allow oneself to be persuaded; not to comply with and to refuse or withhold belief in this case, in Jesus as Messiah, in the Gospel, the good news of salvation offered in Christ. **Apeitheo** speaks of a stubborn, stiff-necked attitude. It speaks of disbelief manifesting itself in disobedience. It is opposed to **pisteuo** (used in Acts 19:2, 4, 19), the verb translated "believe".

**Robertson** adds that like **becoming hardened** this verb is "[imperfect](#) again (**ED**: Some sources say it is [present tense](#)), showing the growing disbelief and disobedience (apeithēs), both ideas as in Acts 14:2+; Acts 17:5+, first refusal to **believe** and then refusal to **obey**. Both sklērunō and apeitheō occur together, as here, in [Ecclus. 30:12](#).

## **HARDENED JEWS BEGIN AGGRESSIVE SMEAR CAMPAIGN**

The reaction by Paul's Jewish adversaries is a clear example of [slander](#) where words are falsely spoken with the intent to damage the reputation of another.

**Speaking evil of the Way before the people** - **Speaking evil** is in the [present tense](#) indicating that these **hardened** Jews were continually [vilifying](#) those who had placed their faith in Jesus and not just before other Jews but to **all the people** of Ephesus! The heart attitudes of these Jews spewed forth out of their mouths, just as Jesus declared that "out of the heart come evil ([poneros](#) = actively hurtful in effect or influence) thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders ([blasphemia](#) - the word kakologeo is a synonym of [blasphemeo](#))." (Mt 15:19).

**The way** (ten hodon) - In the NT Luke alone uses the term **Way** as another name for believers in Jesus. While he does not explain the derivation one cannot help but suggest that this name has some association with Jesus own self-designation as "**the Way**" adding that "no one comes to the Father but through" Him, the Way. (John 14:6). There is only one Way, one Name (Acts 4:12). In John 10:7 Jesus used a related metaphor said "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am **the door** of the sheep." In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus called men to enter the narrow gate and walk the narrow way declaring "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and **the way** is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and **the way is narrow** that leads to life, and there are few who find it." (Mt 7:13-14<sup>+</sup>). Here are other uses of Luke's unique designation of Christians as "**the Way**"...

Acts 9:2 and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to **the Way**, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

Acts 19:9 But when some were becoming hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of **the Way** before the people....

Acts 19:23 About that time there occurred no small disturbance concerning **the Way**.

Acts 22:4 "I persecuted this **Way** to the death, binding and putting both men and women into prisons,

Acts 24:14 "But this I admit to you, that according to **the Way** which they call a sect I do serve the God of our fathers, believing everything that is in accordance with the Law and that is written in the Prophets;

Acts 24:22 But Felix, having a more exact knowledge about **the Way**, put them off, saying, "When Lysias the commander comes down, I will decide your case."

### **Related Resource:**

- [What is "the Way" in the Bible?](#)

**ESV Study Bible** note on the way - meaning either the way of salvation (Acts 16:17; cf. Jesus' teachings in Matt. 7:14; John 14:6) or the true way of life in relation to God (cf. Acts 18:25-26; cf. Ps. 1:1, 6; 27:11).

"THIS IS **THE WAY**; WALK YE IN IT" (Isa. 30:21).

Christ has not come to show us the way, nor has He come only to make the way, but to be the Way. He is the Way.

1. He is the New and living Way, Heb. 10:19.
2. He is the Way through suffering, Heb. 10:19, 20.
3. He is the Way to the Father, Eph. 2:18.
4. He is the Way into Salvation, John 10:9.
5. He is the Way into the Holiest, Heb. 9:8.
6. He is the Way consecrated for us, Heb. 10:20.
7. He is the only Way, John 14:6.

### **Walking in the Way with Jesus**

While walking in the way with Jesus,  
Secure from ev'ry start the blows,  
I'm kept in perfect peace from all my foes.  
While walking in the way with Jesus.

While walking in the way with Jesus,  
I bid farewell to all my fears;  
A bow of promise glows above my tears,  
While walking in the way with Jesus.

While walking in the way with Jesus,  
I hear His "Come to me and rest,"  
And, looking unto Him, my soul is blest  
While walking in the way with Jesus.

While walking in the way with Jesus,  
I see my heav'nly home afar;  
I see the pearly gates for me ajar,  
While walking in the way with Jesus.

**Robertson on speaking evil** - Now these Jews are aggressive opponents of Paul and seek to injure his influence with the crowd.

**Speaking evil** (2551) (**kakologeo** from **kakos** = evil + **lego** = to speak) means literally to speak evil of, to curse (e.g., of parents in Mt 15:4, Mk 7:10). **Kakologeo** means to use unjustified and abusive language against someone. **Kakologeo** is used in Mark 9:39 in regard to someone who was casting out demons. **Louw-Nida** says **kakologeo** means to revile or "to insult in a particularly strong and unjustified manner." The derivative word **katalogos** was a "slanderer." Hellenistically, **kakologeo** means to imprecate evil on, to curse someone (Lxx - Pr. 20:20; Ezek 22:7; Ex 22:28).

**Kakologeo** - 4x - Mt 15:4; Mk. 7:10; Mk. 9:39; Acts 19:9. 5x in the Septuagint - Ex. 21:17; Ex. 22:28; 1 Sa 3:13; Pr 20:20 ("He who **curse**s his father or his mother"); Ezek. 22:7;

**He withdrew from them and took away the disciples** - In a sense Paul "excommunicated" himself from the Jewish synagogue. He severed ties and removed himself and his disciples from their presence. The implication is that during his 3 months of reasoning in the synagogue, some had been convinced and believed in Christ thus becoming His disciples ([mathetes](#)).

**Jack Arnold** - This raises the whole question of when does one separate from a denomination or church? Separation is necessary when an organization goes liberal in theology and will no longer listen to the truth. Paul's example gives three principles to apply before leaving a local church or denomination. First, Paul stayed in the synagogue and evangelized for Christ until the Jews became violent in their opposition. Second, when Paul could no longer stay in the synagogue because it was affecting his attitude and the lives of other Christians, he withdrew. Third, Paul did not wait for the synagogue to expel him, but separated himself and the Christians from apostasy or false teaching. Notice Paul did not separate himself over traditions, ritual, opinions, philosophy of ministry, petty differences, but over doctrinal error and opposition to the truth of Jesus Christ as revealed to him by Christ Himself. ([Sermon](#))

### **PAUL MADE AN "APOSTASY"**

He stood off from the Jews, making a cleavage so to speak, much as he had done at Corinth (Acts 18:7 but a different verb

[metabaino](#)).

**Withdrew** (868)(**aphistemi** from **apo** = separation of one thing from another + **histemi** = stand and is the root of our English = apostasy) literally means to stand off from means to withdraw, to remove oneself from. To withdraw from a place, an association or a relationship. In some context it means to apostatize so one might make play on words that Paul apostasized from the apostates!

**Took away** is a picture of Paul marking limits (cf "horizon") around his disciples much as had the Holy Spirit who said in Acts 13:2-  
"Set apart (**aphorizo** in **aurist imperative**) for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Robertson comments that "The Jews regarded this withdrawal as apostasy, like separating the sheep from the goats (Matthew 25:32). Paul now made a separate church as he had done at Thessalonica and Corinth."

**Took away** (873)(**aphorizo** from **apó** = off from, apart + **horizo** = mark out the limit) means to mark off the boundaries, to appoint, set one apart for some purpose. It is used of the final **separation** of the righteous from the wicked (Mt 13:49; 25:32) (which in a sense is what transpired here in Ephesus for the Jews that were left were hardened and wicked!); of the separation of the disciples from the world (Lk 6:22). The central idea is "to limit by setting apart from the rest," hence, to distinguish from others in some specific way. It is interesting that this same word is used by Paul to describe himself as **set apart** by God from his mother's womb (Gal 1:15+) and **set apart for the Gospel of God** (Ro 1:1+).

**Reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus** (his name means "tyrant"! It was a common name at that time!)- You can't keep a good man down. Paul just did the "Gospel two-step" and moved to a new location. Just as he had **reasoned** in the synagogue now he **reasoned** (see above for same verb **dialegomai**) continually (**present tense**) in the **school of Tyrannus**. The NET Note calls it "the lecture hall of Tyrannus."

**Longenecker on Tyrannus** - This was probably the hall of a local philosopher named Tyrannus ("Tyrant") or one rented out to traveling philosophers by a landlord of that name. Since it is difficult (except in certain bleak moments of parenthood) to think of any parent naming his or her child "Tyrant," the name must have been a nickname given by the man's students or tenants. (Expositor's Bible Commentary – Volume 9: John and Acts)

**School** (4981)(**schole**) means leisure, rest, freedom from labor and business, vacation and came to mean a building where teachers and students met for study and discussion. The pagan sophists often spoke in such halls. **Vine** has "leisure," then, "that for which leisure was employed, a disputation, lecture;" hence, by metonymy, "the place where lectures are delivered, a school." **Robertson** adds that **schole** "is the Greek notion of "school," the Jewish being that of "yoke" as in Matthew 11:29+."

**Gilbrant on schole** - This interesting noun is used in the writings of Pindar (Fifth Century B.C.) to mean "leisure" (Bauer). In the classical world *scholē* could also mean "lecture, **discussion**" (*Liddell-Scott*). The meaning "school, lecture hall" appears to be attested as early as Aristotle (Fourth Century B.C.). In three occurrences in the Septuagint (only 3 uses) **scholē** means "leisure" (Genesis 33:14; Proverbs 28:19; Sirach 38:24).

**Arnold** has an interesting note on **the school of Tyrannus** "The Western Manuscript adds the words, "From the fifth to the tenth hour." Paul and his disciples rented the School of Tyrannus from 11:00 o'clock in the morning to 4:00 o'clock in the afternoon. Why? In the ancient world, the working hours were from about 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., and then they took a five hour break for a siesta and leisure time. Work resumed after 4:00 p.m. and continued until about 10:00 p.m. The point is that Paul and his Christian disciples gave up precious sleeping time and relaxation time to meet, study the Word and witness to anyone who wanted to hear about Jesus Christ. Notice that they were willing to sacrifice time to further the kingdom of Christ." ([Sermon](#))

**MacArthur** agrees that "Paul did not go off duty at 4:00 p.m. but continued ministering well into the evening hours (Acts 20:31), no doubt instructing from house to house Paul maintained this grueling schedule **for two years**." (Ibid)

**Barclay** - One Greek manuscript adds a touch which sounds like the additional detail an eyewitness might bring. It says that Paul taught in that hall from 11 am to 4 pm. Almost certainly, that is when Paul would teach. Until 11 am and after 4 pm, Tyrannus would need the hall himself. In the Ionian cities, all work stopped at 11 am and did not begin again until the late afternoon because of the heat. We are told that there would actually be more people sound asleep in Ephesus at 1 pm than at 1 am. What Paul must have done was to work all morning and all evening at his trade and to teach in the midday hours. It shows us two things—the eagerness of Paul to teach and the eagerness of the Christians to learn. The only time they had was when others rested in the heat of the day—and they seized that time. It may well put many of us to shame for complaining that things are inconvenient at times. (The New Daily Study Bible – The Acts of the Apostles)

**Toussaint** adds that "One Greek manuscript adds that the school was available from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., when most people would



have their noon meal and an afternoon "siesta." This tradition is probably correct. The rest of each day Paul worked with his own hands (Acts 20:34)." (BKC)

---

**Lexham Bible Dictionary on The Way** - One of the primary terms used in the book of Acts to describe the early Jesus movement (e.g., Acts 9:2). Earlier followers of the Jesus movement are also described as "the **disciples**" (hoi mathētai; e.g., Acts 11:26), "the **church**" hē ekklēsia; e.g., Gal 1:13; 1 Cor 1:2), and "**Christians**" (Christianos; e.g., Acts 11:26; 26:28; compare 1 Pet 4:16).

**Origin of the Term** - The origin of the term "the Way" (e.g., Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22) as an early name for the Jesus community is not fully clear, although there is parallel usage to define a community. For example, the term "the Way" is used in Qumran literature (1QS IX, 17; compare VIII, 14 and IX, 19–20), and there is comparable usage in philosophical texts (e.g., Lucian, Menippus 4; Epict. Diatr. 1.4.29). In Qumran literature, the term designates the mode of Jewish life lived by the community at Qumran, involving strict observance of the Mosaic law (Fitzmyer, Acts of the Apostles, 424). These sectarians are thought to have chosen the way (of truth and righteousness) and to be part of Isaiah's highway in the wilderness (Isa 40:3; Keener, Acts 2:1627; compare Mark 1:3). Transposed to the account in Acts—to the early Jewish sect soon to be labeled Christianity (Acts 11:26)—the use of "the Way" may to some extent be taken as referring to the mode of Christian life and morals (compare Did. 1.2, 4.14, 5.1; Barn. 5.4, 11.7, 19.1–2, 12; 20.1; Herm. 35.2), which resonates as well with central scriptural themes (compare, e.g., Exod 18:20; Deut 9:16; Prov 12:28; Keener, Acts 2:1626). It seems that "the Way" is used in Acts because of the claim of Jesus' followers that they had found "the way" through Christ. Keener observes that this is "the distinctive element by which they defined themselves as heirs to the way of truth and righteousness as distinct from others" (Keener, Acts 2:1627). "The Way" is also applied in Christ-related, exclusivist terms (compare John 14:6), meaning Christ is viewed as the only "way" who demands exclusive loyalty; this proclamation and the faith-based and self-sacrificial lifestyle it demanded became a marker for the early church of identity and membership.

**The Way as More than a Sect** - The term "the Way" is partly explained in Acts 24:14 ("the Way, which they [outsiders] call a sect"), where Paul seems to reject the interpretation of "the Way" as just another form of Judaism or as a Jewish sect (hairesis, hairesis) like Pharisaism or Essenism (Fitzmyer, Acts of the Apostles, 735). Instead, it seems that Paul sees "the Way" as its own viewpoint. Although irony is not explicitly thematized in Acts 9, the account of Saul's relation to "the Way" (on his way to Damascus) makes ironic use of hodos-language: "Saul traveled on **the way** against **the Way**, yet he was stopped on **the way** to join **the Way**" (Bock, Theology, 307; see Acts 9:17, 27). Some five to seven years before Paul's conversion to "the Way," the earliest Christian community had begun with the calling of the first disciples to follow Jesus (Hengel, "Eye-witness memory," 75). It is this group that Paul ultimately joins.

---

**Acts 19:10 This took place for two years, so that all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.**

---

NET Acts 19:10 This went on for two years, so that all who lived in the province of Asia, both Jews and Greeks, heard the word of the Lord.

GNT Acts 19:10 το το δ γ νετο π τη δ ο, στε π ντας το ς κατοικο ντας τ ν σ αν κοσαι τ ν λ γον το κυρ ου, ουδα ους τε κα λληνας.

NLT Acts 19:10 This went on for the next two years, so that people throughout the province of Asia-- both Jews and Greeks-- heard the word of the Lord.

KJV 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.

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

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

CSB Acts 19:10 And this went on for two years, so that all the inhabitants of Asia, both Jews and Greeks, heard the message about the Lord.

NIV Acts 19:10 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.

NKJ Acts 19:10 And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

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

YLT Acts 19:10 And this happened for two years so that all those dwelling in Asia did hear the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks,

- **This took place for two years** - Ac 18:11 20:18,31 Ro 10:18
- **so that all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord** - Ac 16:6 2Ti 1:15 1Pe 1:1 Rev 1:4,11
- **both Jews and Greeks** -Ac 18:4 20:20,21 Ro 1:16 10:12 1Co 1:22-24 Ga 3:28 Col 3:11
- [Acts 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PAUL'S EXTENSIVE MINISTRY AT EPHEBUS

**This took place for two years** - That is Paul reasoned concerning Jesus for 2 years in the school of Tyrannus. In Acts 20:31 we learn that Paul was in Ephesus for "**a period of three years.**" Dating is difficult and not necessarily definitive, but with that caveat the time is about 52-55 AD. Most agree that Paul wrote 1 Corinthians near the end of his time at Ephesus (cf Acts 19:22).

**So that** (hoste) - [term of purpose](#). For what purpose did Paul remain in Ephesus? Clearly to assure that the Word of the Lord would spread throughout Asia, which would be modern western Turkey ([See map](#)).

**Vincent on Asia** - Not the Asiatic continent nor Asia Minor. In the time of the apostles the term was commonly understood of the [proconsular province of Asia](#), ([see red highlight area on map](#)) principally of the kingdom of Pergamus left by Attalus III. to the Romans, and including Lydia, Mysia, Caria, and at times parts of Phrygia. The name Asia Minor did not come into use until the fourth century of our era.

**All who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord** - While it is not likely Paul himself spoke to those all over Asia, recall that he had trained disciples of Jesus, and it is almost certain that they in turn spread the Gospel and planted churches. Those churches include the church at [Colossae](#) and [Hierapolis](#) (cf Col 4:13-16) as well as the seven churches addressed by Jesus in the Revelation ([see map](#) - Rev 2:1-7+ = Ephesus, Rev 2:8-11+ = [Smyrna](#); Rev 2:12-17+ = [Pergamum](#); Rev 2:18-29+ = [Thyatira](#); Rev 3:1-6+ = [Sardis](#); Rev 3:7-13+ = [Philadelphia](#); Rev 3:14-22+ = [Laodicea](#)).

**THOUGHT** - This passage is surely an excellent illustration of Paul's pattern for making disciples as he explained to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:2+ "The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, **entrust** ([aorist imperative](#) = "Just Do It!" [paratithemi](#) = a commercial technical term for giving something to someone in trust for safekeeping, in this case THE TREASURE OF THE GOSPEL! It is also in [middle voice](#) which speaks of **personal involvement** in making disciples) these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." Paul trained men who entrusted the treasure of the Gospel to other to faithful, trustworthy men, so that those who were reproduced (disciples) would themselves become reproducers (faithful men - more disciples). This was Paul's secret of his "Asia permeating" ministry and this principle still applies but sadly the Great Commission has largely become the Great Omission if many if not most evangelical churches, which is sad for this reflects disobedience to Jesus' last command to "**Make Disciples.**" (Mt 28:19+). I pray your church is an excellent to this generalization and that you have an active, intentional program of men and women who are themselves disciples and who filled with the Spirit and the Word are making disciples who will be reproducers, for the glory of the Lamb. Amen.

**Both Jews and Greeks** - Notice that although Paul left the Jewish Synagogue, this time he did not make a categorical statement such as "From now on I am turning to the Gentiles." (e.g., Acts 13:46+, Acts 18:6+) And so we see **both Jews and Greeks** heard the Word. Paul had trained his disciples well and they were obedient to the pattern in Romans 1:16+ that "the gospel...is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the **Jew** first and also to the **Greek.**"

**Robertson on all who lived in Asia heard** - Paul apparently remained in Ephesus, but the gospel spread all over the province even to the Lycus Valley including the rest of the seven churches of Rev 1:11; Rev. 2; Rev. 3. Demetrius in Acts 19:26+ will confirm the tremendous influence of Paul's ministry in Ephesus on Asia. Forty years after this [Pliny](#) in his famous letter to [Trajan](#) from [Bithynia](#) ([map](#)) will say of Christianity: "**For the contagion of this superstition has not only spread through cities, but also through villages and country places.**" It was during these years in Ephesus that Paul was greatly disturbed over the troubles in the Corinthian Church. He apparently wrote a letter to them now lost to us (1 Cor. 5:9), received messages from the household of Chloe, a letter from the church, special messengers, sent Timothy, then Titus, may have made a hurried trip himself, wrote our First Corinthians, was planning to go after the return of Titus to Troas where he was to meet him after Pentecost, when all of a sudden the uproar raised by Demetrius hurried Paul away sooner than he had planned. Meanwhile Apollos had returned from Corinth to

Ephesus and refused to go back (1 Cor. 16:12). Paul's message reached Greeks, not merely Hellenists and God-fearers, but some of the Greeks in the upper circles of life in Ephesus.

### Acts 19:11 God was performing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul,

NICNT God accomplished mighty works of no ordinary character through Paul.

NET Acts 19:11 God was performing extraordinary miracles by Paul's hands,

GNT Acts 19:11 Δυν μεις τε ο τ ς τυχο σας θε ς πο ει δι τ ν χειρ ν Πα λου,

NLT Acts 19:11 God gave Paul the power to perform unusual miracles.

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

ESV Acts 19:11 And God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul,

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

CSB Acts 19:11 God was performing extraordinary miracles by Paul's hands,

NIV Acts 19:11 God did extraordinary miracles through Paul,

NKJ Acts 19:11 Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul,

NRS Acts 19:11 God did extraordinary miracles through Paul,

YLT Acts 19:11 mighty works also -- not common -- was God working through the hands of Paul,

- Ac 5:12 14:3 15:12 16:18 Mk 16:17-20 Joh 14:12 Ro 15:18,19 Ga 3:5 Heb 2:4
- [Acts 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## DIVINE-HUMAN SYNERGY

**Willaim Larkin** sets the background - The private side of paganism in the ancient world was the attempt to manipulate spiritual forces via magical incantations, ritual acts and paraphernalia in order to ward off evil and bring well-being. Ephesus was a city most hospitable to magicians, sorcerers and charlatans of all sorts. Attached to the statue of Artemis, the city's chief goddess, were certain symbols, ta [Ephesia grammata](#), which had been turned into a magical formula (Plutarch Moralia 706E; 85B; Arnold 1989:15-16). In a divine initiative, God weds extraordinary miracles with the spread of the Word of the Lord throughout Asia, a territory that Satan had firmly and manifestly in his grasp. We have met such strategic "power advances" before in Acts: in Jerusalem and its Judean environs, Samaria, and Macedonia (Acts 5:16; Acts 8:7; Acts 16:16-18). Now, at the climax of Paul's efforts as a missionary free to move about as he will, Luke presents another. These evidences of the presence of the reign of God (Acts 19:8) in liberating wholeness occur through a unique means. (The IVP New Testament Commentary Series – Acts)

**God was performing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul** - "*Powers not the ones that happen by chance,*" "*not the ordinary ones,*" [litotes](#) for "the extraordinary." (Robertson) Paul was the human instrument that carried out the miracles but it was God Who was actually performing them. These miracles opened the door for the Gospel in a city steeped in practice of the occult. These miracles also confirmed that God's Spirit was working in and through Paul. It is likely that the people in Ephesus regarded Paul as having superhuman power to heal, and it is a testimony to the humility of Paul that he did not seek recognition. Success in the spiritual realm is a test to all of us as the writer of Proverbs warns...

The crucible is for silver and the furnace for gold, And a man is tested by the praise accorded him. (Pr 27:21)

**THOUGHT** - Dear pastor, teacher, elder, etc, are you being tempted to take a share of the glory for some supernatural effects others witness? Don't do it!

**Toussaint** - As seen many times in Acts, miracles confirmed the work of the apostles (Acts 2:43; 4:30; 5:12; 6:8; 8:6, 13; 14:3; 15:12; cf. 2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:3-4). (BKC)

**Kistemaker** points out that "Besides teaching the gospel openly and performing healing miracles, Paul also taught the Good News from house to house (Acts 20:20). Addressing both Jews and Greeks, he admonished them to repent, to turn to God, and to have faith in Jesus Christ (Acts 20:21). (Baker New Testament Commentary – Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles)

**Arnold** - The Ephesians were very superstitious and deeply involved in the occult. Satan and demons had performed many miracles in that city, so God now had to perform special miracles through Paul. They were unusual miracles performed to authenticate Paul's message of Christ. ([Sermon](#))

**Longenecker** - The particle *te* and the adverbial use of *kai* in the Greek sentence indicate that Luke had in mind two types of "extraordinary miracles": (1) direct healings through the laying on of Paul's hands (note the phrase *dia ton cheiron Paulou*, "through the hands of Paul," which NIV does not pick up), and (2) indirect healings through the application of Paul's handkerchiefs and aprons. (Ibid)

Comparing the cloths to Moses' rod, Ray Stedman says "There was nothing magic about the rod itself; it was the *symbol* of something about Moses which God honored. So these sweatbands and trade aprons were symbols of the honest, dignified labor of the apostle, his labor of love and humility of heart, his servant-character which manifested and released the power of God. God means to teach by this that it is through a man whose heart is so utterly committed that he is ready to invest hard, diligent labor in making the gospel available, willing to stoop to a lowly trade, that the power of God is released."

**Extraordinary** (5177)([tugchano/tyrchano](#)) is a verb (used in this passage as an adjective) which means to hit as a target, especially with an arrow and so to reach a mark or object (to attain). In the present passage *tugchano* means to happen anywhere and at any time and thus "common." In our passage it is modified by the Greek negative (*ou*) and means uncommon, special. The full phrase is "*dunamis te ou tas tuchousas*" literally *miracles not the common*, thus "**extraordinary miracles**." One wonders what "ordinary" miracles were?

**Vincent** (*ou tas tuchousas*) - A peculiar expression. Lit., *not usual or common*, such as one might *fall in with* frequently.

**Miracles** (1411)([dunamis](#) from [dunamai](#) = to be able, to have power) describes power to achieve. It refers to intrinsic power or inherent ability, the power or ability to carry out some function, the potential for functioning in some way (power, might, strength, ability, capability), the power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature. is translated miracle/miraculous in about 22 of the over 116 uses.

**Robertson** - "miracles" or "powers" (*dunamis*) are supernatural and out of the ordinary, but here God regularly wrought (*epoiei*, imperfect active) wonders beyond those familiar to the disciples and completely different from the deeds of the Jewish exorcists. This phrase is peculiar to Luke in the N.T. (also Acts 28:2), but it occurs in the classical Greek and in the *Koiné* as in 3 Macc. 3:7 and in papyri and inscriptions (Deissmann, *Bible Studies*, p. 255). In Samaria Philip wrought miracles to deliver the people from the influence of Simon Magus. Here in Ephesus exorcists and other magicians had built an enormous vogue of a false spiritualism and Paul faces unseen forces of evil. His tremendous success led some people to superstitious practices thinking that there was power in Paul's person.

Word Pictures in the New Testament.

**Larkin** comments that "The skeptic and the mimic will immediately draw the wrong conclusions about these happenings: either they did not occur, or they should be copied. Neither response is the intention of Luke or the rest of biblical teaching (Stott 1990:306). Paul, by his own testimony, was a miracleworker; this was part of his credentials as an apostle (Rom 15:19; 2 Cor 12:12; Gal 3:5). These healings did occur, but to imitate them—as some media evangelists have been wont to do with "prayer cloths" or other "prayed-over" trinkets sent through the mail—is to reduce miracle to magic, or impersonal manipulation (contrast Lk 8:43-48). Following James's instructions is still the best way to call on the Lord for healing (Jas 5:14-15). (Ibid)

---

**Steven Cole** draws some modern parallels - As you are no doubt aware, many evangelicals claim that we should often be experiencing the kinds of signs and wonders that we read about in our text. Since the early 20th century, the Pentecostals made such claims, but not many took them seriously. But in the late 1970's, [John Wimber](#) and the Vineyard churches that he spawned began claiming that miracles should be the ordinary experience of the church. Jesus said that His followers would do greater works than He Himself did (Jn 14:12). Wimber asserted that the main reason that we do not see such works of power is our skeptical Western mindset.

Along with Peter Wagner and Charles Kraft, in 1982 Wimber began teaching a course at Fuller Seminary, MC510, popularly called, "**Signs and Wonders**." Hundreds of students took the course, which ran until 1986, when the seminary halted the class and appointed a task force to evaluate the material from biblical, theological, scientific, and pastoral perspectives (published as **Ministry and the Miraculous**, ed. by Lewis Smedes [Fuller Seminary], 1987 - [see review of this book](#); [50 pages of book available online](#) - [has 5 of 7 chapters but NOT chapter 7 - "Miraculous Healing and Responsible Ministry"](#)). Wimber did not believe that miracles will take place every time we pray, but he did teach that they are the necessary manifestation of the kingdom's presence and advance. If we are not doing miracles along with our preaching, we are not preaching the gospel as we should, according to Wimber.

The **hope of miraculous healing** attracts many people to churches that claim to see such miracles happening, because there are many who are afflicted with serious, incurable illnesses. We have many in our church suffering from such diseases. I often pray for them, and I would rejoice if God miraculously healed them. Sometimes God does heal miraculously, and we should pray for it, if it is His will. If I thought that anyone in town, or even in the United States, had the God-given gift of healing, I would either try to bring him here or urge those who are sick to go wherever he was, so that they might be healed. But I question both the Vineyard's theology and its claims of success in healing large numbers of those who are seriously sick. **As the Fuller Seminary evaluation noted, not even the apostles did miracles on a par with those of Jesus. And "by any ordinary standard of equivalence, the healings reported by contemporary healing ministries hardly qualify as 'greater works' than Jesus did"** (p. 31).

Luke notes that these miracles in Ephesus were **extraordinary**, even for the apostle Paul (Acts 19:11). They seem to parallel the **extraordinary** miracles that Peter performed for a brief period in his ministry (Acts 5:15-16). **It is significant that apart from Stephen and Philip, who worked closely under the apostles, there are no miracles recorded as performed by anyone other than the apostles.** And, it seems that all who were brought to them were healed (Acts 5:16). The purpose of these apostolic miracles (according to Heb 2:3-4), was to confirm the message of salvation that Jesus and the apostles proclaimed. In fact, throughout the entire Bible, miracles are not uniformly sprinkled as everyday occurrences. Rather, they are clustered at key moments, such as the Exodus, where God was working on behalf of His people. Those who lived after are often reminded of these former miracles to call them back to God (see Ex 12:14, 12:42, 13:3).

In our text, Paul's extraordinary miracles in Ephesus are contrasted with the attempts of some inept Jewish exorcists to duplicate the miracles. No doubt the early church often chuckled as it retold the story of these seven men running wounded and naked from the house after the demonic man overpowered them. By drawing this contrast, I think that Luke wants us all to learn a vital lesson that many "faith healers" and their followers need to learn:

**We should allow God to use us according to His will for His glory, |  
but we should not try to use Him for our own purposes.**

That summarizes the main difference between Paul and these Jewish exorcists. Paul was allowing God to use him according to God's will and for God's glory. But these spiritual charlatans were trying to use God for their own financial profit, and those who hired the exorcists were trying to use God's power for their own purposes. They had no intention to repent of their sins and submit their lives to God's purpose. Rather, they wanted to use God as an Aladdin's Genie, and then put Him back on the shelf until they needed His services again. Even so, many—even many in the evangelical church—attempt to use God for health or wealth or whatever other favors they desire. When He doesn't perform according to their expectations, they quickly look elsewhere for answers. But in their search for answers to their problems, Jesus Christ is not their Lord. They are their own lords, as seen by their quickly turning to the world when Jesus doesn't seem to work as they had hoped.

If we come to God to use Him to see if He works, then we are still the lords of our lives, and we have not turned from our many sins. If God works, then we'll use Him whenever we need Him, but we determine when and where that will be. Do we need a new job or a raise in our current job? Name it and claim it by faith, and it's yours! Do you need healing from a disease? Command God and He must obey your word of faith! This is what many in the Word of Faith movement are teaching! For example, a prominent Word-Faith teacher has blatantly said,

*Now this is a real shocker, but God has to be given permission to work in this earth realm on behalf of man. Yes, you are in control! So if man has control, who no longer has it? God. When God gave Adam dominion, that meant God no longer had dominion, so God cannot do anything in this earth unless we let Him. And the way we let Him or give Him permission is through prayer.* (Fred Price, quoted by Christianity in Crisis Study Guide, p. 40; in The Signs and Wonders Movement—Exposed [Day One Publications], ed. by Peter Glover, p. 34). (See also [Is the Word of Faith movement biblical?](#))

That kind of heresy makes man the lord and God man's servant. But the God of the Bible is the Sovereign Lord, who "does according to His will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth; and no one can ward off His hand or say to Him, 'What have You done?'" (Da 4:35).

**Acts 19:12 so that handkerchiefs or aprons were even carried from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out**

NICNT Sweat-rags and aprons which had been in contact with his body were actually taken from him and applied to those who were sick, so that their diseases left them and evil spirits were expelled.



NET Acts 19:12 so that when even handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his body were brought to the sick, their diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them.

GNT Acts 19:12 στε κα π το ς σθενο ντας ποφ ρεσθαι π το χρωτ ς α το σουδ ρια σιμικ νθια κα παλλ σσεσθαι π ατ ν τ ς ν σου ς, τ τε πνε ματα τ πονηρ κ πορε εσθαι.

NLT Acts 19:12 When handkerchiefs or aprons that had merely touched his skin were placed on sick people, they were healed of their diseases, and evil spirits were expelled.

KJV 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.

ESV Acts 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.

ASV Acts 19:12 insomuch that unto the sick were carried away from his body handkerchiefs or aprons, and the evil spirits went out.

CSB Acts 19:12 so that even facecloths or work aprons that had touched his skin were brought to the sick, and the diseases left them, and the evil spirits came out of them.

NIV Acts 19:12 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.

NKJ Acts 19:12 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.

NRS Acts 19:12 so that when the handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his skin were brought to the sick, their diseases left them, and the evil spirits came out of them.

YLT Acts 19:12 so that even unto the ailing were brought from his body handkerchiefs or aprons, and the sicknesses departed from them; the evil spirits also went forth from them.

- Ac 5:15 2Ki 4:29-31 13:20,21
- [Acts 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## JUST ONE TOUCH

**Handkerchiefs** and work **aprons** that apparently had touched Paul had miraculous powers from God to heal.

**So that** - Or "for this reason." This almost functions like an explanation of how the miracles were so extraordinary.

**Kistemaker** - The focus is on God, who heals the people physically and through the preaching of the gospel restores them spiritually. God performs "extraordinary miracles," as Luke writes. He demonstrates his power among the people so that they may turn to him in faith and obtain salvation. (Ibid)

**Criswell** - This most unusual vehicle of healing, blessed by God during Paul's ministry at Ephesus, does not seem to be characteristic of apostolic labor in other locales, even in the Book of Acts. By late in the first century such authentication of miracles was diminishing, if not absent altogether. (BSB)

**Handkerchiefs or aprons were even carried from his body to the sick**- Note that these are not magical objects. They were simply the way the Spirit of God choose to manifest His power and point others to His instrument the apostle Paul. As **F F Bruce** reminds us "No intrinsic healing efficacy is ascribed to these things; the healing efficacy lay in the powerful name of Jesus."

**Body** (5559)(**chros**) occurs only here and refers to the surface of the skin and Luke the physician uses it as a **metonym** of the the body. **Chrōs** designates "human skin," and as such is distinguished from **derma** which usually denotes the skin of an animal, normally with the hair still attached.

**Chros** in the Septuagint especially to translate the Hebrew *bāsār*, "flesh" - Ex 28:42; Lev. 13:2; Lev. 13:3; Lev. 13:4; Lev. 13:11; Lev. 13:13; Lev. 13:14; Lev. 13:15; Lev. 13:16; Lev. 13:21; Lev. 15:7; Lev. 16:4.

Luke the physician had mentioned a similar supernatural sign associated with the apostle Peter - "And all the more believers in the Lord, multitudes of men and women, were constantly added to their number, to such an extent that they even carried the sick out into the streets and laid them on cots and pallets, so that when Peter came by at least his **shadow** might fall on any one of them. (Acts 5:14-15+, compare healing through touching Jesus' cloak - Lk 8:44+, Mk 5:27-34; Mk 6:56).



**Handkerchiefs** (napkin)(4676)(**soudarion**) is from a Latin loan word sudarium from sudor (sweat) transliterated into Greek soudarion which is a sweatcloth handkerchief or napkin. (Luke 19:20+; Acts 19:12). In Acts 19:12 the sweat cloths ("handkerchiefs," KJV, NIV, NASB) Paul apparently tied around his head while making tents were taken to heal the sick (F F Bruce, New International Commentary on the New Testament, Acts, p.384).

**Aprons** (4612)(**simikinthion**) a thing girded round half the body" (Latin, semicinctium), was a narrow apron, or linen covering, worn by workmen and servants. **Vincent** says the Latin literally means "something passing half-way round the body: an apron or waistband."

**Gilbrant** - Due to the lack of certainty concerning its exact meaning, some take simikinthion to denote a "bandage," a "handkerchief" (Bauer), or a "piece of clothing worn next to the apostle's skin" (*Moulton-Milligan*). Most, however, take it to refer to an "apron" like that worn by a workman, possibly a tentmaker. (See Acts 18:3 where Paul is referred to as a tentmaker.)

**ESV Study Note** - As had happened at Samaria (Acts 8:9-13+), Cyprus (Acts 13:6-11+), and Philippi (Acts 16:16-18+), the powerful forces of pagan magic (Acts 19:19) and religion connected to demonic activity (Acts 19:12, 15; cf. 1 Cor. 10:20; Eph. 6:12) were confronted by the far more powerful work of the Holy Spirit ministering through Paul.

**Polhill** comments that "This practice often strikes the modern mind as too close to the **relic worship** that plagued the medieval church." (New American Commentary – Volume 26: Acts)

**Longenecker** comments on the unusual nature of the miracles - Ephesus was the home of all sorts of magic and superstition, and the phrase "**Ephesian writings**" (*Ephesia grammata*) was common in antiquity for documents containing spells and magical formulae (cf. Athenaeus *Deipnosophistae* 12.548; Clement of Alexandria *Stromata* 5.242). So it need not be thought unnatural that just as Paul met his audiences at a point of common ground ideologically in order to lead them on to the Good News of salvation in Christ, so at Ephesus he acted in the way here depicted. The virtue, of course, lay not in the materials themselves but in the power of God and the faith of the recipients. Luke's interest throughout this chapter is in emphasizing the supernatural power of the gospel. Therefore he has highlighted these "extraordinary miracles." (Ibid)

**And the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out**- This text treats **diseases** as separate from **evil spirits**. "As a doctor, Luke carefully distinguishes between **diseases** and afflictions caused by **evil spirits** to make clear that not all illness stems from demonic causes." (MacArthur).

**Arnold** makes an interesting statement - It is my belief that no one today has the gift of healing or miracles. If I could see someone raised from the dead, or even be immediately healed as they were in the first century, then I might change my opinion on this matter. God does heal today but He heals through prayer. Healing miracles do take place today but there are no faith-healers. Many so-called faith-healers today have people send in for a specially blessed and anointed handkerchief for a sum of money and promise a healing. This present-day practice is superstition, hocus-pocus and is a perversion of the teaching here in Acts 19:12. ([Sermon](#))

**Ger** - Paul's extraordinary ability to heal the sick in Ephesus was specific to the Ephesian ministry and not a permanent gifting. It is clear from Paul's own biographical epistles that he could not always heal at will (2 Cor. 12:8; Phil 2:27; 1 Tim. 5:23; 2 Tim. 4:20). It is important to notice two qualifications Luke sets forth. First, that every one of the miraculous signs and wonders within Acts was extraordinary and limited to the apostles and their immediate associates. Second, Luke was careful to emphasize that the miracles were not intrinsic to Paul, but that he was merely the instrument through whom God chose to work His power (Acts 19:11). (Twenty-First Century Biblical Commentary Series – The Book of Acts: Witnesses to the World)

**Evil** (wicked, bad) (4190) see notes below on same word **poneros**

**Diseases** (3554)(**nosos**) means illness, sickness, physical malady

**Nosos** - Mt. 4:23; Mt. 4:24; Mt. 8:17; Mt. 9:35; Mt. 10:1; Mk. 1:34; Lk. 4:40; Lk. 6:18; Lk. 7:21; Lk. 9:1; Acts 19:12

**Gilbrant** - In the Septuagint **nosos** is used only 13 times. Its few occurrences are due in part to a preference for two other terms, *arrostia*, "not well, ill" (cf. *arrōstos* [726]), and *malakia* (3091), "weak, soft," and to the Old Testament's use of specific terms for specific illnesses instead of the general term "illness." In the Old Testament illness is almost always considered from a religious point of view. Primary interest is not on the physical causes of illness nor its diagnosis, but rather on the relationship existing between God—who is Master of illness and health, life and death—and the one who is ill. In Israelite thought illness was an evil and contrary to nature, something out of place in God's creation. But if sickness and weakness did affect human life, some believed it was because of sin. Mankind incurred God's wrath because of sin, and consequently, is under the power of evil forces. Thus, suffering and illness were seen as ordinary conditions for a fallen and

sinful mankind. (See Harrison, "Disease," *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, 1:955-960.) The origin of illness can be traced back to the Fall. Death entered the world as a direct result of sin, and to the Hebrews illness merely signaled the beginning of death, something which sapped one's life force. In many of the Psalms it is clear that the sick person believed he was under the power of death. In the Hebrew idiom a person "becomes alive" when he regains his health. When the Psalmist described man as "afflicted and ready to die" from his youth on (88:15), he was not employing poetic exaggeration but acknowledging grim reality. The Law stated that if the Israelites kept God's commands, He would not bring the diseases of Egypt on them (Exodus 15:26; 23:25; Dt 7:12,15). However, serious illness would afflict them if they broke the covenant (Lev 26:15,16; Dt 28:22,27,58-61). Found in this conditional promise is a clear cause and effect relationship between sin and sickness. But innocent people can also be afflicted. When David sinned by starting a census, it was not he alone but his nation that was heavily afflicted with pestilence (2 Sa 24:15-17). Also, when he sinned with the wife of Uriah, their child died (2 Samuel 12:14). The Book of Job also proves that the righteous also suffer illness. The dramatic lessons of this book strongly warn against adopting the view which Job's friends so eloquently asserted—and which was common among the Jews—that illness is always a result of one's personal sins. To a limited degree the priests of Israel were skilled in medicine. Detailed instructions for the recognition and diagnosis of leprosy were provided to protect the nation from this disease (Leviticus 13). Hence the role of man in providing human assistance and nursing is not incompatible with the Law, even though the Lord himself was the healer of Israel (Exodus 15:26). This healing power was also manifested through the prophets (e.g., Elijah and Elisha). Isaiah prophesied that the suffering Messiah would himself take our sicknesses; and healing is provided through His stripes (Isaiah 53:4,5). In the coming kingdom of the Messiah perfect health will reign: "No one living in Zion will say, 'I am ill' " (Isaiah 33:24, NIV).

In the New Testament ***nosos*** appears 12 times—11 times in the Synoptic Gospels and once in Acts (Acts 19:12). It is always used literally of physical illness. The verb *noseō* occurs only once, in a figurative sense of those who have a "morbid craving (*noseō*) for controversy and for disputes about words" (1 Timothy 6:4, RSV). In addition a cognate noun, *nosēma* (3416), occurs once (John 5:4). *Nosos* is used parallel with the other general terms for sickness, *malakia* (3091), *mastix* (3120), *astheneia* (763), and the verb *astheneō* (764), in passages that describe Jesus' healing ministry. It should be noted that New Testament writers distinguished between natural diseases and demonically originated afflictions. Jews following the theology of the Old Testament understood sickness to be in the world because of sin which began at the Fall. Healing testimonies comprise a large portion of the Gospels, showing Jesus spent much of His time ministering to the sick. Sick people gathered around Him, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases; those suffering severe pain, the demon possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed, and He healed them (Mt 4:24). He also sent His disciples out with power and authority to heal (Mt 10:8). Jesus strongly opposed the teaching that sickness and disaster always occur as punishment for particular sins (cf. Luke 13:1ff.). Of the man who had been born blind He said, "Neither hath this man sinned nor his parents" (Jn 9:3). This does not mean Jesus did not believe these people were sinners; rather, it emphasizes that this man's blindness was not a direct result of any particular sin which he or his parents may have committed. Lazarus, the friend of Jesus, became ill not because he had sinned, but in order that through his resurrection the Son of Man might be glorified (Jn 11:1ff.). Perhaps the most significant use of *nosos* is in Matthew 8:17 where Isaiah 53:4 is quoted in a quite literal Greek translation of the Hebrew. Matthew was inspired to choose *nosos* and *astheneia* instead of the Septuagint's "sin and hardships." The message here is that Jesus is the Messiah who provides deliverance from sickness and all effects of the Fall by taking the root cause—the sin of the world—on himself. This and the other uses of *nosos* serve as a reminder that though Christians may suffer the common experience of disease in this fallen world, God has provided for healing in Christ's atonement as one of the benefits of His many-faceted grace. However, it would be very difficult to find the New Testament teaching that illness is in any way a blessing. It is considered quite natural that the one who is ill wishes to regain his health (Matthew 20:32f.; John 5:6). Illness is a by-product of living in a world placed under the curse of sin—as are suffering, sorrow, accidents, and death. The believer can expect the assistance and strength of God through all these, but nevertheless, they are a part of life. Thus even early Christians were afflicted by sickness. One of the best workers of the church "became sick and died" (Acts 9:37, NIV); one of Paul's coworkers "was ill, and almost died" (Php 2:27NIV); and Trophimus had to be left in Miletus because he was sick (2 Timothy 4:20). But the New Testament also teaches that illness is sometimes a judgment of God on sin, for example, Herod the king (Acts 12:23) and Elymas the sorcerer (Acts 13:11). Illness can also be a chastisement from the Lord on His children when they sin, to bring about repentance. For example, in Corinth many became sick and died because they did not recognize the body of the Lord. They were disciplined so they would not "be condemned with the world" (1 Corinthians 11:32). Even the action taken against the person involved in sexual immorality

and delivered “unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh” was intended for his reflection, conversion, and ultimate salvation (1 Corinthians 5:5). Also, those who blasphemed could be disciplined in the same way (1 Timothy 1:20). This particular church discipline was to be conducted in the power of the Lord and stands in strong contrast to the gifts of healing (1 Cor 5:4). In the New Testament illness is traced back to the Fall as in the Old Testament. Through sin death entered the world (Romans 5:12), and naturally, sickness also—the forerunner of death, and its physical cause. Because of the Fall the body of man is now a body of humiliation (Philippians 3:21); it is dead because of sin (Romans 8:10), and subject to death (Romans 8:11) and corruption (1 Corinthians 15:42). In its earthly nature, as flesh and blood, the body cannot inherit the eternal life of the kingdom of God without a radical transformation (1 Corinthians 15:50). In the present state of the body it is impossible to sharply delineate between the condition of being sick and the condition of being healthy. The difference between “healthy” and “ill” is largely a difference in degree rather than a difference in nature. Perfect health belongs to the realm of eternity and cannot be achieved in the present life. This is why the Scriptures state that at the return of Christ the bodies of the believers will be changed “so that they will be like his glorious body” (Philippians 3:21, NIV). At the resurrection the mortal will clothe itself with the immortal (1 Corinthians 15:53). In the eternal state there is no death, sorrow, or suffering (Revelation 21:4), and the leaves of the tree of life will be for the healing of the nations (Revelation 22:2). ([Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary](#))

#### Related Resources:

- [Are faith healers for real? Does a faith healer heal with the same power as Jesus?](#)
- [Is “name it claim it” teaching biblical?](#)
- [What did Jesus mean when He told people, “Your faith has made you well”?](#)
- [Assessing the Wimber Phenomenon](#) - from Christian Research Institute
- [A Theological and Pastoral Critique of the Teaching of John Wimber](#) - 13 page critique by Wallace Benn and Mark Burkill

**Excerpt from introduction** - We want to make it clear right from the outset that we believe God can and does do miracles today. We have seen God work in that way from time to time in our different areas of work and witness. We are all too well aware of the danger of grieving the Holy Spirit through unbelief and we wish to be open to any genuine work of the Holy Spirit in our own times. Furthermore we are grateful for the ways in which Wimber improves on some common thinking (for example, Colin Urquhart and Paul Yonggi Cho) and takes the problems connected with divine healing much more seriously than some. He shows evidence of seriously grappling with the issues (for example, chapter 8 'Not everyone is Healed' in Power Healing, Hodder & Stoughton, London). However in the movement that has become associated with him we see tendencies that are far from helpful and which we believe are in fact dangerous. It is these concerns which we wish to raise in this article. There is no question that the Wimber seminars in Britain have had a huge following and that he has touched a raw nerve with many Christians who want to think through the whole area of healing. Because of the euphoria and enthusiasm surrounding these seminars it is not always easy to encourage rigorous Biblical thinking on the issues. We think that Jonathan Edwards, who himself was involved in a great revival, has a cautionary and helpful word that needs to be taken seriously:

*"They looked upon critical enquiries into the difference between true grace and its counterfeits, or at least being very busy in such enquiries and spending time in them, to be impertinent and unseasonable; tending rather to damp the work of the Spirit of God than promote it; diverting their own minds and the minds of others, as they supposed, from that to which God at such an extraordinary time did loudly call them more specially to attend. The cry was, 'Oh, there is no danger, if we are but lively in religion and full of God's Spirit and lively faith, of being misled! If we do but follow God there is no danger of being led wrong! Let us press forward and not stay and hinder the good work by standing and spending time in these criticisms and carnal reasonings! This was the language of many, until they ran on deep into the Wilderness, and were caught by the briars and thorns of the wilderness."*

As Douglas McBain says in his book Eyes that See the need for discernment is a pressing need for our church today. ' ([see full article](#) for their interesting discussion)

- [What is the Vineyard Movement?](#)
- [Are the miraculous gifts of the Spirit for today?](#)
- [What is the Third Wave Movement?](#)
- [Is the Last Reformation movement biblical?](#)
- [What is the Latter Rain Movement?](#)
- [What is the Charismatic movement?](#)
- [Why does God allow sickness?](#)

- [Why does God allow Satan to attack us?](#)
- [Is it sometimes God's will for believers to be sick?](#)
- [What does it mean that "by His stripes we are healed"?](#)

---

**Norman Geisler - ACTS 19:12—Do the miracles via the clothes from the apostles support the Catholic dogma of venerating religious relics?**

**MISINTERPRETATION:** According to Acts 19:12 "even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him [the apostle Paul] were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them" (NIV). Does this historical occurrence in biblical times lend credence to the Roman Catholic veneration of relics?

**CORRECTING THE MISINTERPRETATION:** The supernatural cures achieved by clothes from the apostle Paul does not prove we should venerate anything. The apostles were given the special "signs of an apostle" (2 Cor. 12:12) to confirm God's special revelation through them (the New Testament). The signs of an apostle are no longer needed for that purpose (Heb. 2:3–4). Regarding their relics, nowhere does it say here or anywhere else in the New Testament to venerate articles through which miracles were performed. God forbade such idolatry in general in the Old Testament. When any object, such as the brazen serpent, was venerated, it was considered idolatry (cf. 2 Kings 18:4 - **ED: THE HEBREW WORD IS "NEHUSTAN" WHICH MEANS SIMPLY A PIECE OF BRASS, NOTHING MORE!**). God clearly commanded his people not to make graven images or to bow down to them in an act of religious devotion. This is the same error of the pagans who worshiped the creature rather than the Creator (Rom. 1:25). The Bible forbids us ever to make or even to "bow" down before an "image" of any creature in an act of religious devotion: "You shall not make for yourselves any carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters under the earth; you shall not bow down nor serve them" (Exod. 20:4–5NKJV). (from [When Cultists Ask](#))

**Acts 19:13 But also some of the Jewish exorcists, who went from place to place, attempted to name over those who had the evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, "I adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches."**

NICNT Some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists also undertook to pronounce the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were possessed by evil spirits. "I adjure you," one would say, "by that Jesus whom Paul proclaims."

NET Acts 19:13 But some itinerant Jewish exorcists tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were possessed by evil spirits, saying, "I sternly warn you by Jesus whom Paul preaches."

GNT Acts 19:13 πεχε ρησαν οτινες κατ'ην περιερχομενων ουδαων ξορκιστην νομιζειν επι τοις χοντασιν επινεματα τ' πονηρα τ' νομα το κυρου ησου λγοντες, ρκιζομεν επι τ' ησου εν τω Παλ'ος κηρσσει.

NLT Acts 19:13 A group of Jews was traveling from town to town casting out evil spirits. They tried to use the name of the Lord Jesus in their incantation, saying, "I command you in the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, to come out!"

KJV 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.

ESV Acts 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."

ASV Acts 19:13 But certain also of the strolling Jews, exorcists, took upon them to name over them that had the evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, I adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.

CSB Acts 19:13 Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists attempted to pronounce the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "I command you by the Jesus that Paul preaches!"

NIV Acts 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 Jesus, whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out."

NKJ Acts 19:13 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."

NRS Acts 19:13 Then some itinerant Jewish exorcists tried to use the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul proclaims."

YLT Acts 19:13 And certain of the wandering exorcist Jews, took upon them to name over those having the evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, 'We adjure you by Jesus, whom Paul doth preach;'

- **some of the Jewish exorcists, who went from place to place** Ge 4:12,14 Ps 109:10
- **exorcists**: Mt 12:27 Lu 11:19
- **attempted to name over those who had the evil spirits**: Ac 8:18,19 Mk 9:38 Lu 9:49
- **adjure**: Jos 6:26 1Sa 14:24 1Ki 22:16 Mt 26:63 Mk 5:7
- [Acts 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## VAGABONDS WHO MOUTHED "JESUS" LIKE IT WAS MAGIC

A **vagabond** is a person who wanders from place to place without a fixed home and generally leads an unsettled, irresponsible, or disreputable life. Such were this "Magnificent Seven" (not to be confused with the famous movie [The Magnificent Seven!](#))

**Mechanical** when used figuratively describes that which is done as if by machine, seemingly uninfluenced by the mind or emotions, not showing thought or spontaneity and thus automatic. And so the sons of Sceva were merely mouthing words, but as they would soon discover, they were simply natural words without supernatural power.

**Kistemaker** - From the Gospels we know that Jews in Israel were casting out demons (Mt. 12:27; Lk 11:19+). Also, the Jewish historian Josephus reports that he saw a countryman driving out a demon from a possessed man in the presence of the Roman general Vespasian. At times, Gentiles asked Jewish teachers to exorcise demons. Some of these teachers visited fellow Jews living in the dispersion and used magic formulas to adjure the evil spirits. Because the formulas often failed to achieve results, the magicians were forced to acquire new adjurations to enhance their craft. A number of ancient manuscripts attest to a variety of incantations that Jewish exorcists employed, and as this account discloses, the city of Ephesus proved to be a storehouse of magical scrolls. (Baker New Testament Commentary – Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles)

**But also some of the Jewish exorcists, who went from place to place-** **Fruchtenbaum** calls them "strolling Jews, exorcists." **NET Bible** calls them [itinerant](#), one who moves from place to place. NLT describes them as "A group of Jews was traveling from town to town casting out evil spirits." They were imitators. Satan often attempts to counterfeit the true (cf ). Apparently this was their "business" and the fact that they had "business" speaks to the prevalence of the occult influence in Ephesus. And the undeniable power that came in the proclamation of Jesus' name began to draw the attention of some wandering Jewish exorcists. According to **F F Bruce**, "Among practitioners of magic in ancient times Jews enjoyed high respect, for they were believed to have exceptionally effective spells at their command." (NINCT Acts).

**Exorcists** (1845)(**exorkistes** from **exorkizo** = to administer an oath, to adjure [Mt 26:63; Lxx Ge 24:3] from **ek** = out + **horkizo** = to make one swear) is strictly speaking one who administers an oath. To bind by an oath. It is one who by adjuration (= a solemn and earnest appeal to someone to do something) and incantation seeks to expel demons from another person. In this sole NT use, it describes the **sons of Sceva** who attempted to drive out demons by "magical formulas" **BDAG** says this word describes "one who drives out evil spirits by invocation of transcendent entities."

**MacArthur** adds **exorcist** "It derives from a root word meaning "to bind with an oath"; ancient exorcists attempted to expel demons by invoking the name of a more powerful spirit being. Exorcists were common in the ancient world, even among the Jews (Matt. 12:27; Acts 13:6). Their fanciful spells and ritual formulas were very different from the absolute authority delegated by Christ and exercised by the apostles. The name of Jesus is no magical charm to be used by whoever wants to use it, as these exorcists soon learned the hard way. (Ibid)

**Who went from place to place** (present tense) (4022)(**perierchomai** from **peri** = about + **erchomai** = to come, go" mean to go about, to wander about, as a ship on an irregular course (Acts 28:13), younger widows (1 Ti 5:11) who "**go around** from house to house." (1 T 5:13). Describes the faithful who **went about** in sheepskins." (Heb 11:37). No uses in the Septuagint. **Perierchomai** - go around(1), sailed around(1), went from place to place(1), went about(1). Acts 19:13; Acts 28:13; 1 Tim. 5:13; Heb. 11:37

The Jewish exorcists who saw Paul drive out demons in the name of Jesus Christ were intrigued. They realized that their own magical powers had failed them but that the words uttered by Paul were effective. **The apostles healed people in the name of Jesus, not to practice magic but to demonstrate Jesus' authority** (compare Acts 3:6+). The term **NAME** signifies the person, words, and works of Jesus, so that anyone who uses this **name** identifies completely with its bearer and becomes a true representative. Therefore, unbelievers can never use the power of Jesus' name. (Baker New Testament Commentary – Exposition of

the Acts of the Apostles)

**Larkin** - The sons' syncretistic appropriation follows the time-honored practice of piling name upon powerful name so as to create incantations strong enough to require spirits to do one's bidding. One such conjuration goes "I conjure you by the god of the Hebrews/Jesus, IABA IAE ABRAOTH AIA THOTH ELE ELO..." (Betz 1986:96). *The name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches* is these men's newest and most potent "power name" (compare Eph 1:21). (Ibid)

**Attempted to name over those who had the evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus- Attempted** is first word in Greek indicating it is emphatic. They are basically using Jesus' name as a magical formula, which has the opposite effect they had hoped for. The name of Jesus has force only when spoken in faith and on His commission as when used by Peter who declared to the crippled man...

"I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: **In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene—walk!**" (Acts 3:6+)

**Attempted** (present tense)(2021)(**epicheireo** from **epi** = upon, in + **cheir** = hand) means to take in hand, to put the hand to, to set one's hand to some task, to endeavor to perform a task, to try, to undertake, whether effective or not. The only uses are by Luke (Lk 1:1, Acts 9:29 = "**attempting** to put him to death,") and in the present passage. **Vincent** adds that **epicheireo** "carries the sense of a difficult undertaking and implies that previous attempts have not been successful. It occurs frequently in medical language. Hippocrates begins one of his medical treatises very much as Luke begins his gospel. "As many as have taken in hand ( *πείρησάν*) to speak or to write concerning the healing art."

**Saying, "I adjure you by Jesus Whom Paul preaches** (**kerusso** - proclaimed as would a herald)" - This was their magical incantation. They thought by associating Jesus' name with **Paul** who preached **Jesus**, they could achieve the same extraordinary miracles as were associated with Paul's handkerchiefs and aprons! They were attempting to carry out the supernatural naturally and found in short order that it did not succeed.

English dictionaries state that to **adjure** (**ad** = to + **jurare** = to swear from **jus** = oath) means to solemnly urge someone to do something and implies advising as well as pleading with the idea of the invoking of something sacred. To adjure can include the idea of to command, often by exacting an oath.

**Kistemaker** - Their adjuration is derivative, for it includes the name of **Paul**. Moreover, they expose themselves as unbelievers, for their adjuration shows that Paul, not the charlatans, serves Jesus. By contrast, consider the man who cast out demons in Jesus' name. Jesus commanded his disciples not to stop this man, for "whoever is not against you is for you" (Luke 9:50). The man evidently believed in Jesus and was his follower. (Ibid)

**Adjure** (3726)(**horkizo** from **horkos** = oath) means to put to an oath, to force to take an oath, to swear (Mk 5:7, Acts 19:13 and in the Textus Receptus of 1 Th 5:27 - modern manuscripts have **enorkizo**). BDAG - to give a command to someone under oath. In Mk. 5:7 the demoniac adjures Jesus by God in an effort to rob him of his power, but to no avail, since Jesus is the Son of God.

The kindred verb, **adjure**, occurs Matthew 26:63 ("But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest said to Him, "I **adjure** (exorkizo - charge under oath) You by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God."), and means, originally, *to administer an oath*.

**Gilbrant** - This word is found in Xenophon (Fourth Century B.C.), the Septuagint, and in papyri. An example is found in the Hadrumetum tablet, Third–Second Centuries B.C., saying, "I adjure you, demonic spirit,...by the God of Abraan..." (free translation; cf. Bauer). **Horkizō** appears almost 30 times in the Septuagint. Of those occurrences with a Hebrew equivalent, **shāva'** is exclusively translated, and always in the hiphil (causative) stem. Thus the sense is usually "I cause to swear" or "I adjure." The servant of Abraham says, "My master made (caused) me to swear" (Genesis 24:37). This causative aspect is in keeping with the suffix -izo in **horkizō** which can denote causation. If an individual himself swears an oath, another expression is used. For instance, when the Lord swears by himself (Genesis 22:16) the Hebrew reads **shāva'** in the niphal (reflexive) aspect. The Septuagint translates this with **omnuō** (3523), "to swear," rather than **horkizō**.

**Horkizo** in Septuagint - Gen. 24:37; Gen. 50:5; Gen. 50:6; Gen. 50:16; Gen. 50:25; Exod. 13:19; Num. 5:19; Num. 5:21; Jos. 6:26; 1 Sam. 14:27; 1 Sam. 14:28; 1 Ki. 2:37; 1 Ki. 2:42; 1 Ki. 22:16; 2 Ki. 11:4; 2 Chr. 18:15; 2 Chr. 36:13; Ezr. 10:5; Neh. 5:12; Neh. 13:25; Cant. 2:7; Cant. 3:5; Cant. 5:8; Cant. 5:9; Cant. 8:4; Dan. 6:12;

**Bruce** - The closest parallel to the Ephesian exorcists' misuse of the name of Jesus appears in a magical papyrus belonging to the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, which contains the adjuration: "I adjure you by Jesus, the God of the Hebrews." (Ibid)



**Polhill** - A number of [magical papyri](#) from the ancient world have been discovered. These consist of various spells that often invoke the names of foreign gods and employ various kinds of gibberish. In the Paris collection of magical papyri, various Old Testament terms are found, such as Iao (for Yahweh), Abraham, and Sabaoth, terms which would have sounded exotic to Greeks and Romans. One spell reads, "I abjure thee by Jesus, the God of the Hebrews." Another from the same papyrus reads, "Hail, God of Abraham, hail, God of Isaac, hail, God of Jacob, Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit, Son of the Father." Ancient magicians were syncretists and would borrow terms from any religion that sounded sufficiently strange to be deemed effective. These Jewish exorcists of Ephesus were only plying their trade. Paul's "spell" in Jesus' name seemed effective for him, so they gave it a try. (Ibid)

**Adolph Deissmann** adds this note on the sons' [incantation](#) - In the formulae of [incantation](#) and [adjuration](#) found in this literature an important part is played by the Divine names. Every possible and impossible designation of deities, Greek, Egyptian and Semitic, is found in profuse variety, just as, in general, this whole class of literature is characterised by a peculiar syncretism of Greek, Egyptian and Semitic ideas. ([Bible Studies](#) - scroll to page 331)

As an word to all Christians who might think dabbling with the occult (horoscopes, fortune tellers/psychics, astrology, ouija boards, etc) is a "neutral" practice, God gives a warning to avoid occult activities...

There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, 11 or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. 12 "For whoever does these things is detestable to the LORD; and because of these detestable things the LORD your God will drive them out before you. (Dt 18:10-12)

**Toussaint** - One of the themes of Acts is the victory of Christ over occultism (cf. 8:9-24; 13:6-12; 16:16-18). This incident is another example of His power over demons. (BKC)

#### **Related Resources:**

- [Can a Christian today perform an exorcism? What does the Bible say about casting out demons?](#)
- [Can a Christian be demon possessed?](#)
- [How are Catholics able to perform exorcisms if many of their beliefs are unbiblical?](#)
- [Can demons attach themselves to non-living/inanimate objects?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about demonic oppression?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about demon possession / demonic possession?](#)
- [John Piper on Healing and Exorcism](#)
- [Do You Believe We Should Cast Out Demons Today?](#)
- [Acts 19:8-10 Exorcism: True or False? Part 1](#) - John MacArthur - gives an interesting survey on spiritual warfare - worth taking time to read.
- [Acts 19:11-20 Exorcism: True or False? Part 2](#) - John MacArthur
- [Magic in the Graeco-Roman World](#)
- [What is the Christian view of psychics / fortune tellers?](#)
- [What is a medium?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about astrology or the Zodiac?](#)
- [What are Ouija boards \(also called a spirit board or talking board\)? Should a Christian dabble with with Ouija boards?](#)
- [What is the Christian view of psychics?](#)
- [Is there any spiritual significance to birthstones?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about dowsing?](#)
- [What are tarot cards? Are tarot cards evil?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about enchantment?](#)
- [Should a Christian consult horoscopes?](#)
- [Should a Christian read fortune cookies?](#)
- [Is there activity of demonic spirits in the world today?](#)
- [What is spiritualism?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about witchcraft / witches? Should a Christian fear witchcraft?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about ghost hunting?](#)
- [Evil Angels, Spiritual Deception and Demon Possession](#)
- [Demons What are They?](#)
- [What is the difference between miracles and magic?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about white magic?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about black magic?](#)

## Acts 19:14 Seven sons of one Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this

NET Acts 19:14 (Now seven sons of a man named Sceva, a Jewish high priest, were doing this.)

GNT Acts 19:14 σαν ὁ πνοϋς Σκευ ουδα ου ρχιερ ως πτ υ ο το το ποιο ντες.

NLT Acts 19:14 Seven sons of Sceva, a leading priest, were doing this.

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

ESV Acts 19:14 Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this.

ASV Acts 19:14 And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, a chief priest, who did this.

CSB Acts 19:14 Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this.

NIV Acts 19:14 Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this.

NKJ Acts 19:14 Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so.

NRS Acts 19:14 Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this.

YLT Acts 19:14 and there were certain -- seven sons of Sceva, a Jew, a chief priest -- who are doing this thing;

- [Acts 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### THE ENIGMATIC SCEVA

**Seven sons of one Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this** - This is all we know of **Sceva**. He is **Jewish**. His name is **Sceva**. He is designated **chief priest**. There is no record he actually lived in Ephesus. Luke says his sons **were doing this** (exorcisms) and does not say he knew about it and does not say whether he approved or not. There is no record of a Jewish chief priest by that name of Sceva, so we can only speculate that either he was a member of a high priestly family or that he claimed this title to impress his clientele. We simply cannot make many objective comments about this passage, so it is best to avoid speculation now and ask Dr Luke in Heaven!

**Were doing** (4160)([poieo](#)) is in the [present tense](#) indicating their activity of casting out of demons was their habitual practice. Ther lifestyle was that of exorcism.

#### Related Resources:

- [Who were the seven sons of Sceva?](#)
- American Tract Society [Sceva](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Sceva](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Sceva](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Sceva](#)
- Hitchcock Bible Names [Sceva](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Sceva](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Sceva](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Sceva](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Sceva](#)

## Acts 19:15 And the evil spirit answered and said to them, "I recognize Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?"

NET Acts 19:15 But the evil spirit replied to them, "I know about Jesus and I am acquainted with Paul, but who are you?"

GNT Acts 19:15 ποκριθ ν ὁ τ πνε μα τ πονηρ ν επεν α το ς, Τ ν [μ ν] ησο ν γιν σκω κα τ ν Πα λον π σταμαι, με ς ὁ τ νες στ ;

NLT Acts 19:15 But one time when they tried it, the evil spirit replied, "I know Jesus, and I know Paul, but who

are you?"

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

ESV Acts 19:15 But the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?"

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

CSB Acts 19:15 The evil spirit answered them, "I know Jesus, and I recognize Paul-- but who are you?"

NIV Acts 19:15 One day the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you?"

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

NRS Acts 19:15 But the evil spirit said to them in reply, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?"

YLT Acts 19:15 and the evil spirit, answering, said, 'Jesus I know, and Paul I am acquainted with; and ye -- who are ye?'

- Ac 16:17,18 Ge 3:1-5 1Ki 22:21-23 Mt 8:29-31 Mk 1:24,34 5:9-13 Lu 4:33-35 8:28-32
- [Acts 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE FAKERS' FALSE FACADE

**Facade** describes a false, superficial, or artificial appearance. These fellows were fakes, [charlatans](#) making showy pretenses that they possessed knowledge of the occult.

**And the evil spirit answered and said to them** - It is as if the human being is the dummy and the demon is his ventriloquist! We encounter a similar pattern in the Gospels. Read Mt. 8:29; Mark 1:24; Luke 4:41+ and note that in each accounts, the demons acknowledge Jesus as the Son of God.

**Kistemaker** comments that "The demon has learned about Jesus and knows that the divine power flowing from Jesus to Paul can overpower him. He also detects the deception that the Jewish exorcists practice and knows that they are powerless. The question, "Who are you?" reveals the demon's contempt." (Ibid)

**I recognize Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?** - Emphatically and literally "*But you, who are you?*" The demons were once in heaven and so they have known Jesus since their creation. And so the demon knew Jesus experientially ([ginosko](#)) and was also acquainted ([epistamai](#)) with Paul. Interesting that Paul was known by this demon! The demon is in this man possessing him, but still knows about Paul. He knows either by this man having encountered Paul in Ephesus or from hearing about him or alternatively the demon knows because it has been communicated to him by other demons.

**NET Note** - This account shows how the power of Paul was so distinct that parallel claims to access that power were denied. In fact, such manipulation, by those who did not know Jesus, was judged (v. 16). The indirect way in which the exorcists made the appeal shows their distance from Jesus.

**Vincent** - There is a purpose in using two different words to denote the demon's recognition of the Divine Master and of the human agent, though it is not easy to convey the difference in a translation. It is the difference between an instinctive *perception* or *recognition* of a supreme power and the more intimate *knowledge* of a human agent. A divine mystery would invest Jesus, which the demon would feel, though he could not penetrate it. His knowledge of a *man* would be greater, in his own estimation at least. The difference may be given roughly, thus: "Jesus I *recognize*, and Paul I *am acquainted with*."

**Recognize** ([1097](#))([ginosko](#)) means to acquire information through some modality, as through sense perception (hearing) and speaks of an experiential knowledge, not merely the accumulation of known facts. Although the verb is different ([eido](#)), the demons declared to Jesus "**I know** ([eido](#)) who you are." (Mk 1:24, Lk 4:34+)

**I know about** ([1987](#))([epistamai](#) from **epi** = upon + **histemi** = to stand) means to fix one's mind on, have intellectual apprehension, to understand, to know (know well - Acts 18:25) or to be acquainted with (Acts 19:15). It can convey the sense of to understand or comprehend (Mark 14:68; 1 Tim. 6:4; James 4:14; Jude 1:10).

**Louw-Nida** on **epistamai** - to possess information about, with the implication of an understanding of the

significance of such information and "to have or gain insight, with focus upon the process - 'to understand, to be aware of, to really know."

**Gilbrant** - Throughout classical Greek, Septuagintal, and Christian literature **epistamai** means either "to be acquainted with" or "to understand." The first meaning, "to be acquainted with," is the dominant one: it indicates having knowledge of something. The second meaning, "to understand," occurs in the New Testament only twice. In 1 Timothy 6:4 the heretic is described as void of understanding (mēden epistamenos). In Mark 14:68 when Peter was confronted with the accusation, "You too were with Jesus," he denied it with these words, "I neither know (oida [3471]) nor understand (epistamai) what you are talking about" (NASB).

**Epistamai** - 14x in 14v - being acquainted(1), know(6), know about(1), knowing(2), knows(1), understand(2), understands(1). Mk. 14:68; Acts 10:28; Acts 15:7; Acts 18:25; Acts 19:15; Acts 19:25; Acts 20:18; Acts 22:19; Acts 24:10; Acts 26:26; 1 Tim. 6:4; Heb. 11:8; Jas. 4:14; Jude 1:10

**Epistamai** in the **Septuagint** - Gen. 47:5; Exod. 4:14; Exod. 9:30; Num. 20:14; Num. 22:34; Num. 24:16; Num. 32:11; Deut. 20:20; Deut. 22:2; Deut. 28:33; Deut. 28:36; Deut. 28:64; Deut. 29:26; Deut. 31:27; Jos. 2:5; Jos. 2:9; Jos. 3:4; Jos. 14:6; 2 Chr. 2:7; 2 Chr. 2:12; Job 13:2; Job 14:21; Job 32:22; Job 37:16; Job 38:4; Job 38:20; Job 38:33; Job 42:3; Prov. 9:13; Prov. 10:21; Prov. 14:22; Prov. 15:2; Prov. 29:7; Isa. 29:11; Isa. 29:12; Isa. 37:28; Isa. 41:20; Isa. 48:8; Isa. 55:5; Isa. 66:18; Jer. 1:5; Jer. 1:6; Jer. 2:8; Jer. 17:16; Ezek. 11:5; Ezek. 17:12; Ezek. 37:3;

**Jack Arnold** - The demon in the man spoke words of disdain, indignation and contempt to the seven exorcists. What happened is rather humorous. The demon answered, "I instinctively and innately recognize Jesus, and I am acquainted with Paul, but who are you? You don't have any power over me!" The demons knew Paul. He was famous in the spiritual underworld and even in hell. Paul was much talked about in the pit. The demons trembled when they saw Paul preaching the gospel. He was a threat to the kingdom of darkness because he was armed with the power of Christ. Frank Barker, pastor of Briarwood Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, Alabama comments on this verse by saying, "But, as Christians, are our names known in hell? As Christians, when we move about, does it cause reverberations in the kingdom of darkness? Do they say something to this effect, "Oh, no! John Jones is working at that place of employment we've held captive for so long. His going there is a dangerous situation for us, because he verbalizes his faith boldly. He shares his faith in Jesus Christ. He prays. He seeks to win others to Jesus. He stands up for the Lord Jesus Christ." ([Sermon](#))

### **Acts 19:16 And the man, in whom was the evil spirit, leaped on them and subdued all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded**

NET Acts 19:16 Then the man who was possessed by the evil spirit jumped on them and beat them all into submission. He prevailed against them so that they fled from that house naked and wounded.

GNT Acts 19:16 καὶ φάλλμενος ἄνθρωπος πᾶτο ὅς νεντ πνευματὸν πονηρὸν, κατακυριεύσας μφοτῶν σχύσεν κατὰ τὸ στεγνὸν καὶ τετραυματισμῶν κτύπηεν τὸ οἶκον ἐκεῖνον.

NLT Acts 19:16 Then the man with the evil spirit leaped on them, overpowered them, and attacked them with such violence that they fled from the house, naked and battered.

KJV 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.

ESV Acts 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.

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

CSB Acts 19:16 Then the man who had the evil spirit leaped on them, overpowered them all, and prevailed against them, so that they ran out of that house naked and wounded.

NIV Acts 19:16 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.

NKJ Acts 19:16 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.

NRS Acts 19:16 Then the man with the evil spirit leaped on them, mastered them all, and so overpowered them that they fled out of the house naked and wounded.

YLT Acts 19:16 And the man, in whom was the evil spirit, leaping upon them, and having overcome them, prevailed against them, so that naked and wounded they did flee out of that house,

- Mk 5:3,4,15 Lu 8:29,35
- [Acts 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PLAYING WITH FIRE BACKFIRES!

**And the man, in whom was the evil spirit, leaped on them and subdued all of them and overpowered them-** He jumped on them to assault them, springing on them as would a panther his prey! To overpower 7 men even if they were only boys indicates this man manifested supernatural strength, surely being empowered by the evil spirit. Some commentaries say there were only 2 sons present because of Luke's use of the adjective [amphoterōi](#) which means both, but it can also but mean mean "all." ("used of more than two" - Abbott-Smith).

**Evil** (wicked, bad) (4190)([poneros](#) from **poneo** = work or toil; Noun [poneria](#) from **poneros**) means evil including evil, malignant character, pernicious, that which is morally or socially worthless, wicked, base, bad, degenerate. **Poneros** denotes determined, aggressive, and fervent evil that actively opposes what is good. **Poneros** is not just bad in character (like kakos), but bad in effect (injurious)! **Poneros** describes evil in active opposition to good. It means not only evil in its nature but viciously evil in its influence and actively harmful. **Poneros** used to describe Satan (**ho poneros** = "Evil one"), the god of this age, who is corrupting man and dragging him to destruction. This denotes someone who is not content in being corrupt themselves. They seek to corrupt others and draw them into the same destruction! Woe!

**Leaped** (2177)([ephallomai](#) from **epi** = upon + [hallomai](#) = to leap, in Lxx used of Spirit coming upon Samson - Jdg 14:6, 19, Jdg 15:14) means to leap or spring upon. It is first in the Greek sentence for emphasis. This is the only NT use but there are 3 uses in the Septuagint and it is interesting that all three relate to the Holy Spirit coming upon Saul (1 Sa 10:6; 1 Sa 11:6; 1 Sa 16:13; and a fourth description of the Spirit coming on Saul is found in 1 Sa 10:10 which uses the root verb hallomai). It is fascinating that the majority of uses of this verb refer to a supernatural being (Spirit in the Septuagint and evil spirit in present passage) coming upon someone, overpowering them (in a good sense of course with the Holy Spirit and a bad sense with the evil spirit).

**Liddell-Scott** on [ephallomai](#) - to spring upon, assail II.-also without hostile sense, c. having leaped upon the chariot.

**Robertson** - Papyri examples exist where [amphoterōi](#) means "all" or more than "two" (Robertson, *Grammar*, p. 745). So here [amphoterōi](#) includes all seven. "Both" in old English was used for more than two.

**NET Note** on **subdued** - "beating them all into submission...According to W. Foerster, TDNT 3:1098, the word means "the exercise of dominion against someone, i.e., to one's own advantage." These exorcists were shown to be powerless in comparison to Jesus who was working through Paul.

**Subdued** ("Mastered") (2634)([katakuriēuo](#) from **katá** = down + **kurieúo** = have dominion over) means to have dominion "down" on others and includes the idea of domineering as in the rule of this supernaturally strengthened demon over these natural men. Kata speaks of "down" and gives a picture of them being beaten down! Note the verb is derived from [kurios](#) which means "Master" so in effect the demons "mastered" the sons of Sceva.

**Overpowered** (2480)([ischuo](#) from **ischus** = might) means the demon was strong in body and had the necessary physical strength to accomplish his objective. They were overcome by his superior force. Compare the power of the demon in Mk 5:3-4.

**So that** (hoste) introduces a result.

**They fled out of that house naked and wounded** - Their charade exposed by their physical beating, they are probably thankful to escape without their clothes but still with their lives. **Wounded** is in the [perfect tense](#) which is fascinating for it indicates that the wounds took some time to heal!

**Fled** (escaped) (1628) (**ekpheugo** from **ek** = out of, from + **pheugo** = move quickly from a point; flee; run) means to flee out of a place, run away and in this context to escape with their lives!

**Naked** (stripped) (1131) (**gumnos** cp our English "gym") means not covered, nude or naked but not necessarily descriptive of absolute nakedness as it was used of a person wearing only an under-tunic (descriptive of the mode of dress in the ancient gymnasiums in Greece and Rome). **Polhill** adds that "With the extreme sense of modesty characteristic of Judaism, the nakedness of the Jewish exorcists was almost symbolic of their total humiliation in the incident." (NAC)

**Wounded** (5135) (**traumatizo** from **trauma** = wound) means to wound and is found only in Lk 20:12 and Acts 19:16. This verb is found in classical Greek from **Aeschylus** (Fifth Century B.C.). The **perfect tense** pictures their wounds as occurring at a point in time (the initial beating) and lasting for a period of time, suggesting they were seriously wounded by the demonic beat down! **Traumatizo** in the **Septuagint** - 1 Sa 31:3; Song 5:7; Isa 53:5; Jer 9:1; Ezek 28:16; Ezek 28:23; Ezek 30:4; Ezek 32:28; Ezek 35:8

**Kistemaker** sums up two results of the beating of the seven sons - On the one hand, these exorcists learned not to invoke the name of Jesus. On the other, the incident promoted the cause of the gospel. (See Acts 19:17)

**Jack Arnold** - One of the manifestations of demon possession is extraordinary physical strength. The demon possessed man took out after the seven single handedly, routed them, tore off their clothes, and they jumped out of doors and windows and ran through the town as streakers. What does this teach us? It is only a Christian using the name of Christ in the power of Christ who can cast out a demon. No human power, even using the name of Christ, can dislodge a demon. Furthermore, we still have the seven sons of Sceva with us today who are trying to change men but they have different names. You can call them "philosophy" or "psychology" or "sociology" or "communism" or "education" or "science" or even "religion." You can call them different names but not one of them has the power to change the heart of man or deliver him from slavery to Satan. Only Christ can change people's lives and give them a spiritual dimension. ([Sermon](#))

**MacArthur** wrote, "Satan would have wished these sons of Sceva to succeed, so that the domain of darkness could compete with God, as Pharaoh's magicians did with Moses. But the attempt to provide competition for the Word was thwarted. In fact, it completely backfired and only brought greater conviction among the Ephesians of the power of Jesus' name and the truth of Paul's preaching." (Ibid)

**Acts 19:17 This became known to all, both Jews and Greeks, who lived in Ephesus; and fear fell upon them all and the name of the Lord Jesus was being magnified**

NET Acts 19:17 This became known to all who lived in Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks; fear came over them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was praised.

GNT Acts 19:17 το το δ γνετο γνωστν π σιν ουδαοις τε κα λλησιν το ς κατοικο σιν τ ν φεσον κα π πρεσεν φ βορ π π ντας α το ς κα μεγαλ νετο τ νομα το κυρ ου ησο .

NLT Acts 19:17 The story of what happened spread quickly all through Ephesus, to Jews and Greeks alike. A solemn fear descended on the city, and the name of the Lord Jesus was greatly honored.

KJV 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.

ESV Acts 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.

ASV Acts 19:17 And this became known to all, both Jews and Greeks, that dwelt at Ephesus; and fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.

CSB Acts 19:17 This became known to everyone who lived in Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks. Then fear fell on all of them, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.

NIV Acts 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.

NKJ Acts 19:17 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.



NRS Acts 19:17 When this became known to all residents of Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks, everyone was awestruck; and the name of the Lord Jesus was praised.

YLT Acts 19:17 and this became known to all, both Jews and Greeks, who are dwelling at Ephesus, and fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was being magnified,

- **all:** Ac 19:10
- **and fear:** Ac 2:43 5:5,11,13 13:12 Lev 10:3 1Sa 6:20 2Sa 6:9 Ps 64:9 Lu 1:65 Lu 7:16
- **the name:** Php 1:20 2:9-11 2Th 1:12 3:1 Heb 2:8,9 Rev 5:12-14
- [Acts 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE NAME ABOVE ALL NAMES GENERATES FEAR

**This became known to all, both Jews and Greeks, who lived in Ephesus** - It became known that Jesus Christ is more powerful than demonic powers.

It is good that the Name of Jesus spread and was magnified so that men and women would come to hopefully believe in Him. Paul makes it clear

For this reason also (Php 2:5-8<sup>+</sup>), God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the **Name** which is above every name, so that at the **Name** of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is **Lord**, to the glory of God the Father. (Php 2:9-11<sup>+</sup>)

**THOUGHT** - Have you confessed Jesus as **Lord**? (cf Ro 10:9-10<sup>+</sup>). It is so sad to see theologians arguing truth the Bible plainly teaches and one is that **Jesus is the Lord** of all, including those who believe and who do not believe in Him. How silly to say we are to "make Him Lord of our lives." He is Lord of our lives because He is Lord of all!

### Related Resources:

- [What is lordship salvation?](#)
- [What is free grace? What is Free Grace Theology?](#)
- [How do I make Jesus Lord of my life?](#)
- [What is cheap grace?](#)

**Polhill** comments that "Two lessons emerge from the story. For one, Christianity has nothing to do with magic. The name of Jesus is no magical incantation. The power of Jesus drives out the demonic, and his Spirit only works through those who, like Paul, confess him and are committed to him. Second, the demon did confess the power of Jesus over him, "Jesus I know." Compare Jas 2:19, "Even the demons believe and shudder." The people of Ephesus recognized this and extolled the powerful name of Jesus as a result. What was true for them is still true. In the name of Jesus is all the power needed to drive out the demonic forces in every age. (NAC)

**Ger** - The news of this humiliation circulated widely throughout Ephesus, and the citizenry realized that when it came to effective exorcisms, they could accept no substitutes for "the real deal." The Lord was magnified in the eyes of unbelievers, who developed a sudden, newfound respect for the name of Jesus. (Ibid)

**And fear fell upon them all and the name of the Lord Jesus was being magnified**- **Magnified** is in the [imperfect tense](#) indicating that the Name of Jesus was being spoken forth with a sense of awe and reverential fear again and again, by one person and then another. This depicts the Name of Jesus spreading throughout this superstitious city who now heard about a Name far greater than any occult name they might name in their incantations!

**Lenski** explains "This was not, in our newspaper parlance, a mere "news story" that was soon to be forgotten for another. It gripped the Ephesians very seriously, for they were all given to superstition and magical practices. They all felt directly involved. A glare of light fell on the whole subject, and not because of the dramatic failure of these exorcists, but because the name "Jesus" was involved as having brought on that failure. Here was a new power that operated with stunning effect even against all powers of superstition. In this connection we must not forget the miracles wrought by Paul himself, nor the effort of these exorcists to duplicate them. It was thus that something akin to holy fear fell on all. And Luke at once adds that "the name of the Lord Jesus began to be magnified." The wonder of that name passed from lip to lip. Paul used that name, and the demons were expelled; the exorcists used

it, and were themselves crushed. What was back of that name?" (The Interpretation of The Acts of the Apostles.)

**Fell upon** (1968)(**epipipto** from **epi** = upon + **pipto** = fall) means literally to fall upon (someone) or to press against (Mk 3:10) and is used both literally and figuratively. Luke uses **ekpipto** figuratively three times to describe the Holy Spirit coming down upon or "falling upon" someone (Acts 8:16, 10:44, 11:15). Luke also used **epipito** to describe fear falling upon Zacharias who "was troubled when he saw the angel, and fear **gripped** him." (Lk 1:12+) So just as godly Zacharias was "**gripped**" by fear of the supernatural, so too the residents of Ephesus were gripped by fear at the supernatural phenomena they had witnessed and heard about.

**Fear** (reverence, awe) (5401)(**phobos**) is used in an active sense to describe that which causes fear or terror, in this case the source being God (Jesus) and His divine power. Compare fear as result of the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira - Acts 5:5, 11+, Rev 11:11 ± = two slain witnesses come to life and ascend to heaven before a watching world!).

**Magnified** (3170)(**megaluno** from **megas** - great) to make or declare great. Most commonly in the NT as in this passage, it means to magnify or praise (Luke 1:46; Acts 5:13; 10:46; 19:17; 2 Cor. 10:15; Phil. 1:20; Sept.: 2 Sa 7:26; Ps. 34:3; 69:31).

**Jack Arnold** - A good dose of fear fell upon Ephesus, but it did not stop with non-Christians only. A realization of Christ's power in the spiritual realm brought wayward and disinterested Christians to a new dedication. ([Sermon](#))

**Larkin** summarizes this passage noting that "demonstrations of divine power do not automatically produce conversions (see comment at Acts 9:35, 42, where they do). They do, however, demonstrate the reality of the Lord's spiritual power and its superiority to, and difference from, magic. Realizing that Jesus' name is not to be manipulated, the populace is now in a better position to hear the good news of repentance and forgiveness of sins declared in that name (Lk 24:47). And for Christians who have *believed* for a while (perfect tense of pisteuo so indicates), it is now time for a final break with their past. (The IVP New Testament Commentary Series – Acts)

**Steven Cole** adds "While sometimes God uses miracles to bring unbelievers to faith (Ac 13:6-12), that is not the general rule. The gospel is the power of God for salvation to all who believe (Ro 1:16). God uses the foolishness of the preaching of the cross to save souls (1Co 1:18). We should stay focused on God's Word and the gospel, rather than get distracted by signs and wonders.

#### Acts 19:18 Many also of those who had believed kept coming, confessing and disclosing their practices

NICNT Many of those who believed also came and made confession, divulging their spells.

NET Acts 19:18 Many of those who had believed came forward, confessing and making their deeds known.

GNT Acts 19:18 πολλοι τε τινες πεπιστευκτων ρχοντο ξομολογομενοι και ναγγλλοντες τς πρξεις αυτων.

NLT Acts 19:18 Many who became believers confessed their sinful practices.

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

ESV Acts 19:18 Also many of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices.

ASV Acts 19:18 Many also of them that had believed came, confessing, and declaring their deeds.

CSB Acts 19:18 And many who had become believers came confessing and disclosing their practices,

NIV Acts 19:18 Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed their evil deeds.

NKJ Acts 19:18 And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds.

NRS Acts 19:18 Also many of those who became believers confessed and disclosed their practices.

YLT Acts 19:18 many also of those who did believe were coming, confessing and declaring their acts,

- **confessing:** Lev 16:21 26:40 Job 33:27,28 Ps 32:5 Pr 28:13 Jer 3:13 Eze 16:63 36:31 Mt 3:6 Ro 10:10 1Jn 1:9
- [Acts 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### THE RESULT OF THE NAME OF JESUS BEING MAGNIFIED

A reverential fear in the believers as a result of the powerful Name of Jesus caused them to realize the nothingness of their superstitious magical arts and objects. Conviction of their consciences resulted in them coming and confessing.

**Lenski** comments that "They saw their delusion in the light of the Savior's name and that they were still sinning against him and his divine, saving power." (Ibid)

**Many also of those who had believed kept coming** - Presumably these were men and women who had heard the Gospel preached by Paul and received it by faith and now sought to repent of their former way of life!

**Who had believed** (4100)(**pisteuo** from **pistis**; cf the **obedience of faith**) means they had considered Jesus as truly God and worthy of their trust and so they accepted him as their Savior. **Pisteuo** in the **perfect tense** describes those who had at point in time in the past believed in the Name of Jesus (Acts 4:12+) and continued in their belief. They were the "real deal!" (Compare **Perseverance of the Saints**)

**Robertson** on Luke's picturesque use of **kept coming** - **imperfect tense middle voice** (ED: middle emphasizes personal involvement), **kept coming, one after another**. (ED: YOU CAN ALMOST IMAGINE THIS SCENE!) Even some of the believers were secretly under the spell of these false spiritualists just as some Christians today cherish private contacts with so-called occult powers through mediums, seances, of which they are ashamed.

**THOUGHT** - Some 25 years ago I was made aware of so-called deliverance ministries and became very intrigued, even purchasing an expensive set of "teaching tapes." I soon grew very uneasy about this new teaching that was sweeping through a number of evangelical, Bible believing churches. I became very concerned when I saw some of the tragic "fruit" of these practices including divorce in one evangelical couple who had played an instrumental role in my early walk with Christ. It was very disturbing and disillusioning. While this is only one anecdotal example, it behooves all Bible believing Christians to heed the caution of Paul who commanded the saints at Thessalonica to "**examine** (**dokimazo** in the **present imperative**) everything carefully; **hold fast** (**dokimazo** in the **present imperative**) to that which is good; **abstain** (**dokimazo** in the **present imperative**) from every form of evil." (1 Th 5:21-22+) And again (in the context of granting forgiveness) he writes that forgiveness be given "in order that no advantage (**pleonekteo**) be taken of us by Satan; for we are not ignorant (**pleonekteo**) of his schemes (**noema**)." (2 Cor 2:10-11) Although the sermons by John MacArthur (below) are almost 50 years old (1974), they address a number of aspects of the occult that even then were infiltrating the evangelical church. I was amazed when I searched Google (May, 2019) for "**deliverance ministries**" (in quotes) and retrieved **649,000** hits! I agree with the reputable source Bible.org which says "We should exercise caution about "deliverance ministries" and indiscriminate exorcisms." (**Spiritual Warfare**) (See also Acts 17:11+)

#### Related Resources:

- [What does the Bible say about deliverance?](#) -
- [What is deliverance ministry, and is it biblical?](#) - highly recommended
- [Deliverance Ministry in Historical Perspective - Christian Research Institute](#)
- [How much emphasis should be given to demonic deliverance in the Christian life?](#)
- [Can a Christian be demon possessed?](#) (See [Youtube video portrayed above](#))
- [Spiritual strongholds - what is the biblical view?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about demon possession / demonic possession?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about demonic oppression?](#)
- [How do we distinguish a psychological disorder from demon possession?](#)
- [Can a Christian today perform an exorcism? What does the Bible say about casting out demons?](#)
- [Acts 19:8-10 Exorcism: True or False? Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Acts 19:11-20 Exorcism: True or False? Part 2](#) - John MacArthur
- [Article - Can Christians Be Demon-Possessed?](#)
- [What is the biblical teaching on astrology?](#)
- [Can Satan Hear Our Thoughts?](#)

**Confessing and disclosing** (announcing) **their practices** - These believers had been involved in essence in **spiritism** and the Spirit convicted them of their **syncretistic** beliefs. This is clear evidence that their belief was genuine and is in essence the equivalent of repentance, for their change in mind was followed by a change in practice. It is interesting and notable that these individuals **confessing and disclosing their practices** clearly appear to be believers in Jesus Christ and yet Luke makes no mention of **any** of them having demons cast out but to the contrary emphasizes them casting out (so to speak) their "demonic" practices.

**Confessing** ([present tense](#) - continually) (1843) ([exomologeō](#) from **ek** - wholly out from or **ex** = out or intensify [implies full, open confession, openly or publicly] + [homologeō](#) - to say same thing about) means to confess forth and thus is stronger than **homologeō**. In the present context **exomologeō** means to openly make admission of wrong-doing or sin. In Mt 3:6 **exomologeō** speaks of an open confession, not a private one. **James** also speaks of open confession - "Therefore, **confess** (plural - [present imperative](#)) your sins to one another, and **pray** (plural - [present imperative](#)) for one another so that you may be healed ([Iaomai](#)). The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much."

**Exomologeō** - 10x - Matt. 3:6; Matt. 11:25; Mk. 1:5; Lk. 10:21; Lk. 22:6; Acts 19:18; Rom. 14:11; Rom. 15:9; Phil. 2:11; Jas. 5:16.

In English **disclose** means "to make known to the public information that was previously known only to a few people or that was meant to be kept a secret."

**Disclosing** ([present tense](#)) (312) ([anaggello/anangelo](#) from **aná** = again {like English prefix **re**= again thus **re**-port or **re**-hearse = to say again} + **aggéllo** = tell) means to tell of things done, to provide information, to disclose.

**Anaggello** in Acts 14:27; Acts 15:4; Acts 19:18; Acts 20:20; Acts 20:27

**Vincent** comments that "The two words (**exomologeō** and **anaggello**) denote **the fullest and most open confession**. They *openly* (**ex**) confessed, and declared *thoroughly* (**ana** = *from top to bottom*) their deeds.

**Lenski** makes an interesting point - We have the exact counterpart today: Christians who still resort to witchcraft for healing, for warding off evil, for directing their lives in difficulties, and the like. See, for instance, the comprehensive and most excellent work by Wuttke, *Der Deutsche Volksaberglaube*. Every experienced physician and every pastor can tell many a tale. In spite of all enlightenment and education the ilk of those who practice the uncanny arts is still legion. If only the churches themselves could clean house as this was done in Ephesus! To no small extent the preachers themselves have been guilty in keeping alive superstitious faith in the claims of witchcraft by admitting that its charms are effective. After an extensive study the writer here declares: they never work; they are remnants of paganism; the holy names, symbols, and Scripture words used in them are substitutions for pagan originals, a desecration of the most damnable kind, the devil's delight; they deceive, and this is the real devil's power in them; they are dangerous even when they are tried in fun; they do "work" in countless cases and often produce the saddest physical, mental, and invariably also spiritual damage. Fail not to include spiritualism..(Ibid)

**Robertson** on **disclosing their practices** - Judgment was beginning at the house of God. The dupes (professing believers, alas) of these jugglers or exorcists now had their eyes opened when they saw the utter defeat of the tricksters who had tried to use the name of Jesus without his power. The boomerang was tremendous. The black arts were now laid bare in their real character. Gentile converts had a struggle to shake off their corrupt environment

**Practices** (4234) ([praxis](#) from [prasso](#) = to practice) is an act, deed or practice. In the plural, **praxis** refers to one's acts or works and by extension to one's conduct. **Praxis** has the basic meaning of a doing of something, i.e., a deed. It could refer to a habitual or established practice. It later came to connote something that was ordinarily done or practiced, a normal function. In the present context **praxis** functioned as a technical term for magic practices which is similar to the use of the verb [prasso](#) which sometimes had the technical sense of "practice magic." In the Webster's Thesaurus a synonym for **praxis** (**praxis** is transliterated and found in English dictionaries) is **habit** which is interesting as it pictures these magic practices as habits.

**Deissmann** writes that **praxis** was "a [terminus technicus](#) for a particular spell." ([Scroll to note 5 on page 330](#))

**Jack Arnold** - Apparently, this refers to Christians who began to confess their sins and come to grips with their superstitions which they had been secretly holding on to since their conversion to Christ. They were undoubtedly new converts who had never given much thought to the evilness of these practices. They were visibly shaken by the supernaturalism of Christ and began to clean up their lives, divulge their hidden practices and confess openly what they were doing privately. As young Christians, they still held on to some of their old ways, but God brought real conviction to their souls. They stopped fooling around with astrology, horoscopes and the influence of the stars which had been bringing them defeat and disillusionment in their Christian lives. Some of the Christians, although they had been converted to Christianity for some time, still had books on magic in their homes and still were, in some ways, in complicity with the occult. By their confession, the church was purified, for no Christian is to have any connection with the forces of darkness. "And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them" (Eph.5:11). These Christians brought their secret sin into the light. This was the beginning of true revival in the church at Ephesus.

**What sins, Christian, are you still holding on to from your unsaved life?** Does the demon of pride, materialism, pleasure, procrastination, sex, alcohol, drugs, criticism and gossip plague you? Have you fully turned over these kinds of practices to the Lordship of Christ? When you received Christ, you said you would follow Him as Lord. Now you must consistently bow to His Lordship so your life can change. You will never have power in your life until you come to grips with secret practices that you have carried over from your unsaved life. ([Sermon](#))

**Larkin** applies this passage to present day Christians - Today the temptation is still present to syncretize a newfound faith with pre-Christian ways of using "power" to cope with life. Whether it be worship and manipulation of the new power levers of secularization—money, education, science, technology—or the traditional practices of occult magic in their time-honored or New Age form, those who live under Jesus' lordship must sooner or later come to terms with any compromise in these matters and follow the Ephesian Christians' example of making a clean break with their "power" past. (Ibid)

**Acts 19:19 And many of those who practiced magic brought their books together and began burning them in the sight of everyone; and they counted up the price of them and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver**

NET Acts 19:19 Large numbers of those who had practiced magic collected their books and burned them up in the presence of everyone. When the value of the books was added up, it was found to total fifty thousand silver coins.

GNT Acts 19:19 κανο ὁ τ ν τ περ εργα πραξ ντων συνεν γκαντες τ ς β βλους κατ καιον ν πιον π ντων, κα συνεψ φισαν τ ς τιμ ς α τ ν κα ε ρον ργυρ ου μυρι δας π ντε.

NLT Acts 19:19 A number of them who had been practicing sorcery brought their incantation books and burned them at a public bonfire. The value of the books was several million dollars.

KJV 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.

ESV Acts 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.

ASV Acts 19:19 And not a few of them that practised magical arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all; and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.

CSB Acts 19:19 while many of those who had practiced magic collected their books and burned them in front of everyone. So they calculated their value and found it to be 50,000 pieces of silver.

NIV Acts 19:19 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.

NKJ Acts 19:19 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.

NRS Acts 19:19 A number of those who practiced magic collected their books and burned them publicly; when the value of these books was calculated, it was found to come to fifty thousand silver coins.

YLT Acts 19:19 and many of those who had practised the curious arts, having brought the books together, were burning them before all; and they reckoned together the prices of them, and found it five myriads of silverlings;

- **practiced:** Ac 8:9-11 13:6,8 Ex 7:11,22 De 18:10-12 1Sa 28:7-9 1Ch 10:13 2Ch 33:6 Isa 8:19 47:12,13 Da 2:2
- **burning:** Ge 35:4 Ex 32:20 De 7:25,26 Isa 2:20,21 30:22 Mt 5:29,30 Lu 14:33 Heb 10:34
- [Acts 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL EXPOSES THE DEEDS OF DARKNESS

The apostle John explains that "everyone who **does** ([prasso](#) in [present tense](#) - same verb Luke uses here in Acts 19:19) evil hates ([present tense](#)) the **Light** (2 Cor 4:4), and does not come to the **Light** for fear that his deeds will be exposed ([elegcho](#)) (2 Cor 4:6). But he who practices ([poieo](#) in [present tense](#)) the truth (Jn 14:6) comes to the **Light**, so that his deeds may be manifested ([phaneroo](#)) as having been wrought in God." (John 3:20-21)

The scene Luke describes reminds us of Paul's command

**Do not be bound together** ([present imperative with a negative](#)) with unbelievers; for ([term of explanation](#)) what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship ([koinonia](#)) has light with darkness? (2 Cor 6:14)



**And many of those who practiced magic** (cf Acts 8:9-11+; Acts 13:6,8+) - Interesting that Luke says "**many**" and not "all" suggesting some held on to their magic paraphernalia. Of course, this could have been Ephesians who had not believed in Jesus. Nevertheless, it is always tempting to "hold on" to some of the things we practiced in our former life and fail to make a clean break (enabled by the Spirit).

**THOUGHT** - Probably many/most of us have a few items of "baggage" we would still like to "toss overboard" so to speak. Before we were saved we all had **praxis** or habits and many if not most were bad (evil). Now that we are saved we are to submit to the Spirit, trust His enabling power and put to death or kill those evil habits. (Ro 8:13+) And if you are like me, those old "ruts in the road" of our minds die off very slowly and unwillingly and too often seem to come back to life! Don't be discouraged by occasional lapses into the old ways, but trust the Spirit to lead you in the right direction (cf Gal 5:18+, Ro 8:14+) and over time the habit will have less and less of a grip on your heart and mind. Praise God!

**Robertson** says "Considerable number of the performers or exorcists themselves who knew that they were humbugs were led to renounce their evil practices."

**Polhill** - Magic was part of Ephesian culture. Nor should one question the integrity of these Ephesian Christians who only now openly forsook such ways. Salvation involves a process of growth, of increasing sanctification. And after all, the Ephesian spells were not that remote from the horoscopes and board games that supposedly communicate telepathic messages **with which many Christians dabble in our own day**. (Ibid) (**ED: WORD TO THE WISE - DABBLING WITH THE DEMONIC IS DANGEROUS, EVEN GAMES LIKE [DUNGEONS & DRAGONS](#), [especially the early versions]!**)

**Practiced** (4238) (**prasso**) means doing something as a regular practice or as a routine habit, and is distinguished from **poieo** which means "to do" which focuses more on the end/achievement of the action. And so Luke's use of **prasso** clearly pictures these practitioners as not just dabbling occasionally with a **[ouija board](#)** but diving in wholeheartedly and habitually as they sought to bring about some supernatural effect or end.

Luke's uses of **prasso** -

Lk. 3:13; Lk. 19:23; Lk. 22:23; Lk. 23:15; Lk. 23:41; Acts 3:17; Acts 5:35; Acts 15:29; Acts 16:28; Acts 17:7; Acts 19:19; Acts 19:36; Acts 25:11; Acts 25:25; Acts 26:9; Acts 26:20; Acts 26:26; Acts 26:31

**Magic** (4021) (**periergos** from **peri** = beyond + **ergon** = work, deed) literally "a work about." **Friberg** says literally "overcareful, overdoing." **Vincent** says "overwrought, elaborate." In classic Greek had a negative meaning of "taking needless trouble" (description of those considered meddlesome and used with this sense in 1 Ti 5:13 to describe women who were "busybodies") and a positive meaning of inquisitive or curious. However the idea of curious merged with leading one beyond the normal range of knowledge and thus into the occult, superstition or magic (Plutarch used **periergos** to mean "curious" or "superstitious"). **BDAG** adds that this second sense pertains to undue or misdirected curiosity (**periergos techne** - excessive, superfluous) as in the practice of magic, belonging to magic...compare to our colloquialism "fool around with." **Robertson** notes that **periergos** "is a technical term for magic as the papyri and inscriptions show."

**Deissmann** on **periergos** - Thus the expression *ta perierga* is a **terminus technicus** for magic. ([Scroll to note 5 on page 330](#))

**Zodhiates** on **periergos** - "(In 1 Ti 5:13) Used of people who scurry about fussing over, and meddling in, other peoples' affairs being overwrought with unnecessary care." It was also a standard term for black arts or magic (Acts 19:19). It pointed to the lengthy and various rituals involved in incantation ceremonies and the fastidiousness with which they were performed. (Complete Word Study Dictionary – New Testament)

**Liddell - Scott** on **periergos** - 1. careful overmuch, Lys., etc. 2. busy about other folk's affairs, meddling, a busybody, Xen. II. pass. done with especial care, elaborate, Aeschin., etc. 2. superfluous, Plat., etc. 3. curious, superstitious, Plut.

**Gilbrant** on "A papyrus of the Third or Fourth Century A.D. refers to the magic arts of the populace through which they consulted idols by means of herbs and other devices (cf. *Moulton-Milligan*).

## A GLORIOUS CONFLAGRATION

**Robertson** quips "What a glorious conflagration it would be if in every city all the salacious, blasphemous, degrading books, pamphlets, magazines, and papers could be piled together and burned." One wonders what he would have said about the INTERNET!!! Sadly the devil has intimately interwoven evil with good in the internet, and we have become so computerized that it would be difficult to function without internet access (you're accessing hopefully some of the "good" even as you read these notes!)



Ephesus was a "magical" culture - Magic is a category into which have been placed various beliefs and practices considered separate from both religion and science. Emerging within Western culture, the term has historically often had pejorative connotations, with things labelled magical perceived as being socially unacceptable, primitive, or foreign. ([Wikipedia](#))

**Brought their books together and began burning them in the sight of everyone** - Their **books** (or scrolls) contained the magical names and incantations used in their "magical arts." **Began burning** is in the [imperfect tense](#) which presents a vivid picture of what was transpiring in Ephesus - some would bring their books and toss them on the pile, then another, and another, etc. It was quite an "unholy bonfire!" And it likely was not completed in one day but continued. Their actions give us an excellent illustration of genuine confession and repentance. They backed up their words with their actions, always a good thing to do, especially when it has to do with confessing sin (1 Jn 1:9+).

This tangible example of repentance is similar that Paul described among the pagan idol worshipers in Thessalonica writing...

For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how **you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God**, (1 Th 1:9+)

**Books** (975) ([biblion](#) from **biblos** = the inner bark of a papyrus plant, hence a [scroll](#), a book) is the diminutive form of **biblos** and means a book, a roll, a volume, a document, a [scroll](#), a writing. Ancient writing were in the form of a [scroll](#), which was "sheets of [papyrus](#) glued together and rolled at each end to collect a long literature work in a form for public reading or private study." (Holman; See also [Hastings' Dictionary](#))

**Lenski** adds these **books** were "little papyrus rolls that were inscribed with magical formulas and symbols. They used them for their own benefit but also for the benefit of others, and often, as at present, had extensive patronage. Now they wanted to get rid of these treasured documents and, therefore, collected them and proceeded to burn them."

**Vincent** on **books** - Containing magical formulas. Heathen writers often allude to the [Ephesian letters](#). These were symbols, or magical sentences written on slips of parchment, and carried about as [amulets](#) (and [charms with incantations](#)). Sometimes they were engraved on seals. The imperfect (**began burning**) is graphic, describing them as throwing book after book on the pile.

**Burning** (2618) ([katakaio](#) from **kata** = intensifies meaning of verb + **kaio** = to burn) means to burn up (completely), to consume or destroy by fire. The word denotes a violent consuming heat. It means to burn utterly as of chaff (Mt 3:17, Lk 3:17), tares (Mt 13:30,40), magic paraphernalia (Acts 19:19), works believers do in their own strength, for their own glory (1 Cor 3:15), earth (here in 2 Pe 3:10), trees and grass (Rev 8:7), the rebuilt city of Babylon (Re 17:16+, Re 18:8+) **Robertson** on the prefix **kata** - (burned) up, we say; down, the Greeks say, perfective use of kata

**In the sight of everyone** - The confession and "repenting" was done publicly

## COUNTING THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

**Polhill** - Their magical books must have been much like the papyrus collections that have been unearthed and are now on display in museums in Paris, Berlin, Rome, and London. All ancient books were expensive, but magical collections brought a considerable premium. (NAC)

**And they counted up the price of them and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver** - They "counted the cost" and were willing to pay it! How much was this worth? Commentators give quite a range from 10-50,000 dollars, but emphasize that whatever the modern equivalent, it was a large sum.

**Lenski** points out that 50,000 "was a lot of money to be consigned to the flames. It was one of the best investments these believers ever made. And no one had the brilliant idea of selling these bibloi to the pagans and the Jews and of setting the price aside for *sacred use*. Incidentally, this sum of 50,000 drachmae gives some indication as to the size to which the Ephesian congregation had grown." (Ibid)

**NET Note** on **fifty thousand** - Or "fifty thousand silver drachmas" (about \$10,000 US dollars). BDAG 2.c states, "arguriou muriasas pente 50,000 (Attic silver) drachmas (ED: SEE [ANCIENT DRACHMA](#)) Acts 19:19." Another way to express the value would be in sheep: One [drachma](#) could buy one sheep. So this many drachmas could purchase a huge flock of sheep. A drachma also equals a [denarius](#), or a day's wage for the average worker. So this amount would be equal to 50,000 work days or in excess of 8,300 weeks of labor (the weeks are calculated at six working days because of the Jewish cultural context). The impact of Christianity on the Ephesian economy was considerable (note in regard to this the concerns expressed in Acts 19:26-27).

**Vincent's** comment shows how wide the variation is regarding the cost of the occult paraphernalia - If reckoned in Jewish money, about thirty-five thousand dollars; if in Greek drachmae, as is more probable, about nine thousand three hundred dollars.

**Robertson** - Ephesus was largely Greek and probably the silver pieces were Greek [drachmae](#) or the Latin [denarius](#), probably about ten thousand dollars or two thousand English pounds.

**NLT** says "The value of the books was several million dollars."

Luke's point is not a specific number as much as the (priceless) specific transforming effect of the Gospel on the hearts of these new believers!

**Counted** (4860)(**sumpsephizo** from **sun** = together + **psephizo** = to count with stones, to reckon [count the cost of required renunciation] in Lk 14:28+, to vote with stones, to reach a verdict [Acts 26:10] from **psephos** = stones as used for counting) means to reckon together, to add up, calculate, compute. In secular Greek - "count the hours." It is interesting that the root word is **psephos** which in the plural was used to describe small stones used in occult practices (astrology, soothsaying - TDNT). **Vincent** - "The preposition [sun/syn](#), *together*, in the compound verb, indicates the reckoning up of the sum-total.

Their actions are a perfect example of Jesus' description of a disciple declaring...

"For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and **counteth the cost**, whether he have sufficient to finish it?" (Lk 14:28+)

"So therefore, no one of you can be My disciple who **does not give up** all his own possessions." (Lk 14:33+)

**Jack Arnold** - Christians, old and new, brought their books of magic, their charms, amulets and talismans with Ephesian Inscriptions, and their papers of white and black arts and piled them up and burned them. They did not sell them for a profit or give them away but burned them. The amount of these things was the equivalent of around \$10,000.00 today which was a considerable sum of money in that day. Their confession led to conflagration, indicating the reality of their repentance. If confession is real, it will lead to renunciation of sins. These Ephesian Christians were changing the total pattern of their lives because they saw they could no longer dabble in the occult and be a Christian too. They were no longer "playing church." They meant business. They sacrificed. They paid a price. They denied self. **What about you Christian?** Are you ready to confess your sins and put a fire to books, records, dresses, TV programs, bathing suits, excessive materialism, excessive use of time for pleasure and other worldly and evil practices which sap the power of Christ from you? Are there things that need to be confessed, repented of, and thrown into the fire? When you begin to deal severely with your life, then you will experience the power of Christ and revival. Is Christ really lord in your experience? Are you just playing church? ([Sermon](#))

**Jack Andrews** practical application - Are you facing the attacks of the devil? Are you trying to resist him in the power of the flesh? Do you need the Lord to drive the devil out of your life, out of your home, out of your marriage? Is the devil using you to disrupt and destroy? Are your children causing havoc? Is the name of the Lord Jesus being magnified here? Have you renounced your deeds? Have you repented of your deeds? Is the word of the Lord growing mightily and prevailing here? Do you need to cast down an idol? Do you need to bring something to the fire? Would you make a clean break and in full repentance come to Jesus? May the Lord Jesus be magnified in our lives and His church! May the Word of the Lord give the mighty victory! (Jack Andrews Expository Studies – Understanding Acts - Volume 5)

**Related Resources from Wikipedia** (Be a Berean - Acts 17:11)...

- [Kabbalah](#), an esoteric method, discipline and school of thought of Judaism
- [Practical Kabbalah](#), a branch of the Jewish mystical tradition that concerns the use of magic
- [Christian Kabbalah](#), an incorporation of Jewish Kabbalah into Christian theology from the Renaissance onwards

#### Acts 19:20 So the word of the Lord was growing mightily and prevailing.

NET Acts 19:20 In this way the word of the Lord continued to grow in power and to prevail.

GNT Acts 19:20 Ο τωϑ κατ κρ τοϑ το κυρ ου λ γοϑ η ξανεν κα σχυεν.

NLT Acts 19:20 So the message about the Lord spread widely and had a powerful effect.

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

ESV Acts 19:20 So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily.

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

CSB Acts 19:20 In this way the Lord's message flourished and prevailed.

NIV Acts 19:20 In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.

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

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

YLT Acts 19:20 so powerfully was the word of God increasing and prevailing.

- Ac 6:7 12:24 Isa 55:11 2Th 3:1
- [Acts 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE POWER OF THE LIVING WORD TO GROW AND PREVAIL

**Andrews** comments "The devil doesn't like to lose—but he is a LOSER! The Lord Jesus was being magnified in Ephesus—the Word of the Lord was being glorified in Ephesus!"...Would to God that His word would grow mightily and prevail in America! (Ibid)(Amen)

**Toussaint** comments that "With this sixth "progress report" Luke brought another section of his book to a conclusion (cf. Acts 2:47; Acts 6:7+; Acts 9:31+; Acts 12:24+; Acts 16:5+; Acts 28:30-31+)." (BKC)

**Larkin** comments that "Luke's theology places proclamation of the gospel message at the center of any "power advance" in the church's mission, and so should ours." (Ibid)

**So (houtos)** means in this manner, in this way. This begs the question "In what way?" The way refers to the evidence Luke had just described of the transforming power of the Gospel (see Acts 19:11-19). The news of this "occult bonfire" surely spread throughout the city because it was as if these individuals were willing to burn up something very valuable to them and something of considerable worth. And this would have generated curiosity in the pagans as to why anyone would be willing to make such a sacrifice. This clearly would have opened some doors for the speaking forth of the Word of God...**so the word of the Lord was growing mightily!**

**Lenski** - It is the **Word** that grew and prevailed in the double sense of extending to more and more converts and of more and more filling their hearts and their lives.

**The word of the Lord was growing mightily and prevailing-** The **Word of the Lord** refers to the Gospel. **The Word** is personified and appropriately so for we know the Word of God is living and active (energetic - [energes](#)) (Heb 4:12-13<sup>+</sup>), and yet it does not go forth unless it is spoken. So clearly the believers were speaking forth the word of the Lord. The [imperfect tense](#) of **was growing** depicts the growth occurring again and again. One envisions Gospel "farmers" in Ephesus sowing the seed of the Word hither and yon (and the Holy Spirit taking the Word and bringing about "the washing of regeneration and renewing" (Titus 3:5<sup>+</sup>) in the hearts of men and women dead in their trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1<sup>+</sup>). Remember the Gospel has intrinsic power (dunamis - dynamic power), so our role is to speak forth this dynamically powerful supernatural Word to the Lord. God's Spirit gives the growth and causes the Word to prevail.

**Word of the Lord** in the New Testament - note concentration in the book of Acts...

Lk. 22:61; Acts 8:25; Acts 11:16; Acts 12:24; Acts 13:44; Acts 13:48; Acts 13:49; Acts 15:35; Acts 15:36; Acts 16:32; Acts 19:10; Acts 19:20; 1 Thess. 1:8; 1 Thess. 4:15; 2 Thess. 3:1; 1 Pet. 1:25

**Was growing** (837)([auxano](#)) means to cause to grow or cause to become greater in extent, size, state, or quality. Note especially the vitality inherent in the **Word of God** - Acts 6:7; 12:24; 19:20 - So what? Preach the Word in season and out (2 Ti 4:2) if you want to see your congregation grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18). There are no shortcuts. God offers us no "Plan B!"

Luke punctuates the book of Acts with this axiomatic truth that the Word of God was vital to the spread of the Gospel. If it was then, is it not still true of the mission fields in America? ([Rhetorical](#) of course! So are you in a church that is preaching the Word? Are you preaching the Word? Are you teaching the Word? see 2 Ti 4:2<sup>+</sup>)

Acts 6:7+ The **Word of God** kept on **spreading** ([auxano](#)); and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.

Acts 12:24+ But the **Word of the Lord** continued to **grow** ([auxano](#)) and to be multiplied.

Paul used **auxano** of spiritual growth, describing the **Gospel** which had come to and transformed the lives of the Colossians "just as in all the world also it (the gospel) is constantly bearing fruit and **increasing**, even as it has been doing in you also since the day you heard of it and understood the grace of God in truth." (Col 1:6+) There is no spiritual growth for the body (the church) apart from union with the Head, Christ. Using **auxano** with a similar meaning, Paul wrote to the Corinthian church -- "I planted, Apollos watered, but God was **causing the growth**. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who **causes the growth**." (1Cor 3:6-7)

And in one of the most foundational truths in the New Testament regarding spiritual growth ([progressive sanctification](#)), Peter says that after "putting aside ([middle voice](#) - calls for personal involvement) all malice and all guile and hypocrisy and envy and all slander (ALL OF THESE WILL BLUNT YOUR APPETITE FOR THE WORD! IF YOU ARE NOT HUNGERING FOR THE WORD DAILY, THEN DO A PERSONAL INVENTORY FROM PETER'S LIST), like newborn babes, **long for** ([epipotheo](#) in the [aorist imperative](#) = **"Just Do It"** - [in dependence on the Spirit's enabling your desire and power!](#)) the pure (unadulterated, no additives, no artificial substitutes) milk of the Word, that (purpose clause) by it you **may grow** (**auxano**) in respect to salvation (into conformity to the image of Christ). (1 Peter 2:1+, 1 Peter 2:2+, cf Peter's prayer for the saints in 2 Peter 3:18+ where **"grow"** is **auxano** in the [present imperative](#) - this is to be a saint's lifestyle [empowered by the Spirit](#) and the Word!)

**Jack Andrews** - The power of God was seen in the **salvation, repentance, and separation** of the people. (Ibid)

**Mightily** (2904)(**kratos**) means strength or might, especially manifested power, exerting itself *until it prevails* or secures submission (gains *mastery*, dominates) and in the present context until it secures submission and gains mastery of the soul of a sinner, the Spirit using the Word to bring them to salvation. Kratos was a common military term ([Thucydides](#)). Most of the NT uses (10/12) of **kratos** are in references to God Almighty, and make the point that ultimate dominion belongs to God Alone. Here of course **kratos** points to the "dominion" of God's Word, which is the supreme authority. **Gary Hill** says **kratos** "plants God's flag down" to show forth His victory (mastery)!" The only other use of **kratos** by Luke is Luke 1:51 ""He has donemighty deeds with His arm; He has scattered those who were proud in the thoughts of their heart."

All 12 NT uses of **kratos** - Lk. 1:51; Acts 19:20; Eph. 1:19; Eph. 6:10; Col. 1:11; 1 Tim. 6:16; Heb. 2:14; 1 Pet. 4:11; 1 Pet. 5:11; Jude 1:25; Rev. 1:6; Rev. 5:13.

**And prevailing** - **The Word of the Lord** was proving itself superior, gaining mastery as Paul and his disciples proclaimed it throughout Asia (cf Acts 19:10+). The [imperfect tense](#) describes this as it's effect again and again. Such is the power of the Word of God! Don't ever underestimate the power of the Word. Someone may pretend that the Word you spoke to them had no effect (e.g., if they reject the Gospel), but rest assured, it did effect them one way or another (same sun that softens the wax, hardens the clay) and one of the most frightening effects is that every time they hear the Gospel and reject it, they become more hardened in their heart. What a frightening scenario! (cf 2 Cor 6:2, Read one of the most solemn warnings in all of Scripture Heb 10:26-31+ where Heb 10:31 was used by Jonathan Edwards for his sermon title - [Sinners in the Hands of An Angry God](#)).

**Prevailing** (2480)(**ischuo** from **ischus** = might) is embodied strength that "gets into the fray" (action), i.e. strength that engages the resistance. **Ischuo** can speak of physical power (Mk 2:17, the demoniac in Mk 5:4). **Ischuo** equates to having efficacy, to availing or to having force. It is intriguing and a bit ironic that Luke used the same verb in Acts 19:16 to describe the forces of darkness as the demon possessed man overpowered the seven sons of Sceva! The Word of God is even more powerful for the demons are overpowered by the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God! **Ischuo** can speak of having the required resources to accomplish some objective as here in Acts 19:20 where **ischuo** describes the "*strength*" of the Gospel which is able to accomplish the purpose for which it is sent out (spoken) (see God's promise in Isaiah 55:11). **Ischuo** 28 uses in the NT - Matt. 5:13; Matt. 8:28; Matt. 9:12; Matt. 26:40; Mk. 2:17; Mk. 5:4; Mk. 9:18; Mk. 14:37; Lk. 6:48; Lk. 8:43; Lk. 13:24; Lk. 14:6; Lk. 14:29; Lk. 14:30; Lk. 16:3; Lk. 20:26; Jn. 21:6; Acts 6:10; Acts 15:10; Acts 19:16; Acts 19:20; Acts 25:7; Acts 27:16; Gal. 5:6; Phil. 4:13; Heb. 9:17; Jas. 5:16; Rev. 12:8

This description parallels Paul's description of the Gospel as "the**power** (**dunamis**) of God for salvation to everyone who believes." (Ro 1:16+). The Gospel has intrinsic power, and **ischuo** pictures it as having strength to engage resistance (think of an unbelieving heart which is "engaged" and believes). **Ischuo** speaks of having the required personal resources as in Paul's testimony in Php 4:13+ where he says that he "**can** (**ischuo** - [present tense](#)) do all things through Him Who strengthens ([endunamoo](#) in the [present tense](#) = continually strengthens) him."

Believers need to realize that when they speak forth the Word, it is not just any word, but is a Word which can grow and prevail. Preachers are you preaching this Word?

**Warren Wiersbe** lamented that "It is sad when Christians have no appetite for God's Word, but must be 'fed' religious entertainment instead. As we **grow**, we discover that the Word is milk for babes, but also strong meat for the mature (He 5:11-12+, Heb 5:13-14+).

It is also bread (Mt. 4:4) and honey (Ps 119:103)." ([Bible Exposition Commentary. 1989. Victor](#)) (**ED COMMENT** - The point is that there is no spiritual growth in a believer who does not personally (and consistently) imbibe the milk of the living and active Word of God.)

**Jack Arnold** asks "Why don't we experience more power in our lives as Christians? We have the Bible, we have Christ in our life and we have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit as did the first century Christians. Why don't we see more power? Christ works through dedicated serious and committed Christians. When we get serious, Christ will get serious." ([Sermon](#))

**Robertson** - Imperfect actives, kept growing and gaining strength. It was a day of triumph for Christ in Ephesus, this city of vast wealth and superstition. Ephesus for centuries will be one of the centres of Christian power. Timothy will come here and John the Apostle and Polycarp and Irenaeus.

#### **Related Resources:**

- [The Power of God's Word](#)
- [The Word of God - Quotations and Illustrations](#)
- [Hebrews 4:12 Commentary](#)
- [1 Thessalonians 2:13 Commentary](#)
- [Memorizing His Word](#)
- [A Primer On Biblical Meditation](#)

---

#### **Growing and Prevailing - Sermon Notes - C H Spurgeon**

And many that believed came, and confessed, and showed their deeds. (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. (20) So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed. Acts 19:18-20

This last verse is a despatch from the seat of war announcing a glorious victory for the royal arms.

Past triumphs of the gospel may be used as encouragements. We, too, shall see the Word of God grow and prevail, for—

- The gospel is the same as ever.
- The human race is unchanged at heart.
- The sins to be overcome are the same.
- The Holy Spirit is just as mighty to convince and renew.

The trophies of victory may be expected to be the same. Men, magic, books, and the love of money shall all be subdued. Let us turn aside to see—

**I. THE WORD OF GOD PLANTED.** Planted it was, or it could not have grown. The work proceeded in the following fashion—

1. Certain disciples were further enlightened, aroused, and led to seek a higher degree of grace. This was an admirable beginning, and revivals thus commenced are usually lasting.
2. These became obedient to an ordinance which had been overlooked (verse 5), and also received the Holy Ghost, of whom they had heard nothing: two great helps to revival.
3. A bold ministry proclaimed and defended the truth.
4. Opposition was aroused. This is always a needful sign. God is not at work long without the devil working also.
5. Deceitful counterfeiting commenced, and was speedily ended in the most remarkable manner.
6. Paul preached, pleaded, made the gospel to sound forth, and on departing could say, "I am pure from the blood of all men."

Read this and the following chapter, and see how three years were well spent in planting the church at Ephesus.

**II. THE WORD OF GOD GROWING.** "So mightily grew the word of God." The measure of it was seen—

1. In a church formed with many suitable elders.
2. In a neighborhood fully aware of the presence of the gospel among them. It touched them practically, so much so, that important trades were affected.

3. In a people converted, and openly confessing their conversion.

4. In a general respect paid to the faith. Even those who did not obey it, yet yielded it homage and owned its power.

Here we see Paul's work and God's work. Paul labored diligently in planting, and God made it to grow, yet it was all of God.

Is the word of God growing among us? If not, why not?

- It is a living seed, and should grow.
- It is a living seed, and will grow unless we hinder it.

**III. THE WORD OF GOD PREVAILING.** Growth arouses opposition; but where the word grows with inward vitality it prevails over outward opposition. The particular proof of prevalence here given is the burning of magical books.

1. Paul does not appear to have dwelt continually upon the evil habit of using magical arts; but gospel light showed the guilt of witchcraft, and providence cast contempt on it.

2. The sin being exposed, it was confessed by those who had been guilty of it, and by those who had commenced its study.

3. Being confessed, it was renounced altogether, and, though there was no command to that effect, yet in a voluntary zeal of indignation the books were burned. This was right because—If sold, they would do harm. They were so detestable that they deserved burning. Their public burning lighted up a testimony.

4. Their destruction involved expense, which was willingly incurred, and that expense gave weight to the testimony. No other proof of power in our ministry will equal that which is seen in its practical effect upon our hearers' lives.

Will you who attend our preaching see to it that you purge yourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit?

## Sparks

It's a blessed time in a soul, it's a blessed time in a family, it's a blessed time in a congregation, it's a blessed time in a country when the word of God grows mightily and prevails . . . It's a blessed time when open sinners are seen leaving their sins and seeking the Savior; when men are seen giving up their unholy gains; when tavern-keepers take down their signs and burn them when they give up their licenses; and it's a blessed time when card-players throw away their cards and take the Bible instead. It's a blessed time when the lovers of gaudy dress take their gaudy dresses and destroy them. Robert Murray McCheyne

The gospel, like a plant of great vigor, will grow almost among stones. Thus have I seen it to grow among hypocrites, formalists, and worldlings; and I have seen it laying hold of one, and another, and indeed of many, however untoward the surrounding soil "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed."

When the leaven of the gospel begins to work, there will be no need of a train of arguments to prove how inexpedient, how utterly unworthy it is for a Christian to turn aside after the vain amusements and trifling books used by the world: "Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols?" What have I to do with black arts, or dealing with a lie? Those who first trusted in Christ were willing to forsake all and follow him. The grace of the gospel produces a new taste — it alters everything about us — our friends, our pursuits, our books, etc. — Richard Cecil

Agesilaus, when he saw the usurer's bonds and bills blazing in the fire, said, "I never saw a better or a brighter fire in all my life!" and it were heartily to be wished that all scandalous, blasphemous, and seditious books and pamphlets were on the fire, too. — John Spencer

Yes, God blessed the self-denial, and gave them compensation and a compensation, too, remarkably appropriate. They who burned books, obtained books. They burned books for Christ, and they received books from him. Have you never heard of Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians? Do you recollect no such letter as one from the Savior "to the Angel of the church at Ephesus"? — T. R. Stevenson

The Earl of Rochester, of whom it has been said that he was "a great wit, a great scholar, a great poet, a great sinner, and a great penitent," left a strict charge to the person in whose custody his papers were, to burn all his profane and lewd writings, as being only fit to promote vice and immorality, by which he had so highly offended God, and shamed and blasphemed the holy religion into which he had been baptized.



**Acts 19:21 Now after these things were finished, Paul purposed in the spirit to go to Jerusalem after he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome."**

NET Acts 19:21 Now after all these things had taken place, Paul resolved to go to Jerusalem, passing through Macedonia and Achaia. He said, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome."

GNT Acts 19:21 ς δ πληρθη τατα, θετο Παλος ν τ πνεμαπι διελθ ν τ ν Μακεδον αν κα χα αν πορε εσθαι ε ς εροσ λυμα ε π ν τι Μετ τ γεν σθαι με κε δε με κα μην δε ν.

NLT Acts 19:21 Afterward Paul felt compelled by the Spirit to go over to Macedonia and Achaia before going to Jerusalem. "And after that," he said, "I must go on to Rome!"

KJV 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.

ESV Acts 19:21 Now after these events Paul resolved in the Spirit to pass through Macedonia and Achaia and go to Jerusalem, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome."

ASV Acts 19:21 Now 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.

CSB Acts 19:21 When these events were over, Paul resolved in the Spirit to pass through Macedonia and Achaia and go to Jerusalem. "After I've been there," he said, "I must see Rome as well!"

NIV Acts 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."

NKJ Acts 19:21 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."

NRS Acts 19:21 Now after these things had been accomplished, Paul resolved in the Spirit to go through Macedonia and Achaia, and then to go on to Jerusalem. He said, "After I have gone there, I must also see Rome."

YLT Acts 19:21 And when these things were fulfilled, Paul purposed in the Spirit, having gone through Macedonia and Achaia, to go on to Jerusalem, saying -- 'After my being there, it behoveth me also to see Rome;'

- **Now after these things were finished** Ro 15:25-28 Ga 2:1
- **Paul purposed in the spirit to go to Jerusalem**-Ac 16:6-10 18:21 20:22 La 3:37 Ro 1:13 2Co 1:15-18
- **after he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia** - Ac 20:1-6
- **to go to Jerusalem** - Ac 20:16,22 21:4,11-15,17 24:17,18 Ro 15:25,26
- **I must also see Rome** - Ac 18:21 23:11 25:10-12 27:1,24 28:16,30,31 Ro 1:15 15:23-29 Php 1:12-14
- [Acts 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



Click to enlarge - from the Holman Bible Atlas (digital book; Hardcover)  
copyright © 1998 B&H Publishing Group,  
Used by permission, all rights reserved.  
This is one of the best resources for Bible maps.  
Please do not reproduce this map on any other webpage.

## PAUL SETS HIS SIGHTS ON ROME

**The last half of Acts 19 can be divided into two sections:** In Acts 19:21-22 Luke gives us a preview of Paul's future travels. He does this by recording Paul's desires as to where he would go. Paul's focus is set on the capital of the Roman Empire, the great city of Rome. But before he goes to Rome, he desires to revisit Europe, namely, Macedonia and Achaia, in which there were church plants -- Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens (presumably?) and Corinth were situated. Before Rome he wanted to return to Jerusalem and as discussed his purpose was to take them a financial gift (love offering) from the churches in Europe.

At first reading Acts 19:21-22 might seem confusing, but simply read it like a parenthesis or an explanation by Luke of what would take place after the riot in Ephesus (Acts 19:23-41). And so after the assembly had been dismissed (Acts 19:41), Luke picks back up with a travelogue that in essence is the fulfillment of the "preview" in Acts 19:21-22

After the uproar had ceased, Paul sent for the disciples (AT EPHEBUS), and when he had exhorted them and taken his leave of them, he left to go to Macedonia. When he had gone through those districts (MACEDONIA - Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea) and had given them much exhortation, he came to Greece. (Acts 20:1-2+)

**Comment** - Click to enlarge the map above to help follow along with these notes. Note that in that beautiful map there is not record of Paul's trip to Illyricum (see following note).

Luke obviously does not include all of the details about **Paul's trip from Ephesus to Macedonia**. For example when compared with Paul's other letters it is clear that he spent time in [Troas](#) and was awaiting Titus who never arrived (2 Co 2:12). From there Paul went to Macedonia ([see map](#) - 2 Co 2:13) which is where the first European churches had been planted - Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea (? Amphibolus, Neapolis). It is very possible that from Macedonia Paul went on to [Illyricum](#) (just to north and west of [Macedonia](#) - See dark brown area on [map](#)), for he later writes "round about as far as **Illyricum** I have fully preached the gospel of Christ." (Ro 15:19+) His declaration certainly suggests that he was literally in **Illyricum**. However, the timing of his trip to **Illyricum** can only be suggested as having occurred after he had visited the churches in [Macedonia](#), but we cannot be dogmatic. **Ryrie** says that "From Macedonia Paul wrote 2 Corinthians and followed it up with his final recorded visit to the church (Acts 20:1-4)." While Paul was in [Macedonia](#), Titus arrived with the news that the church at Corinth had accepted his first letter (written from Ephesus - see 1 Cor 16:8, 19) and which prompted the writing of his second epistle to the Corinthians. Are you hanging with me regarding these events? When Luke records after his time in Macedonia that "he came to Greece" we are to understand this as his arrival in **Achaia** (see Acts 19:21) and specifically to the church at Corinth.

**Now after these things were finished** - This would suggest that it is at the end of 2 years of ministry and not only had Ephesus been evangelized, but so had virtually every major city in Asia.

**Finished** (4137) ([pleroo](#)) means to fill up completely, and speaks of totality. **Pleroo** in **Acts** - Acts 1:16; Acts 2:2; Acts 2:28; Acts 3:18; Acts 5:3; Acts 5:28; Acts 7:23; Acts 7:30; Acts 9:23; Acts 12:25; Acts 13:25; Acts 13:27; Acts 13:52; Acts 14:26; Acts 19:21; Acts 24:27

Paul used **pleroo** in Romans 15:18-19+ in which he summarized his 3 missionary journeys across the eastern and northeastern provinces of the Roman Empire...

For I will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished ([katargazomai](#)) through me (PAUL VIEWED HIMSELF AS AN "INSTRUMENT," A [CONDUIT](#) IN THE HANDS OF GOD, A GOOD PATTERN TO [EMULATE](#)!), resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed (See the [obedience of faith](#)), 19 in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Spirit; so that from Jerusalem and round about as far as Illyricum I have **fully preached** ([pleroo](#) in the [perfect tense](#) = speaks of the enduring effect of the Gospel he preached) the Gospel of Christ. (Romans 15:18-19+)

**Paul purposed in the spirit** - Does Luke mean the Holy Spirit or Paul's spirit? Some translation see this as the Holy Spirit (NAS, NLT, ESV, CSB, NKJV, NRSV, YLT). Others see it as Paul's spirit (NET, NIV). **Toussaint** says "Since the verb means "purposed," not "was led," it may refer to Paul's human spirit." (BKC) Surely one "translation" does not exclude the other because Paul was clearly a Spirit filled (controlled) man and even as he purposed in his human spirit, that purposing would have been energized by the indwelling Spirit, for Paul would later write "it is God who is at work ([energeo](#) in [present tense](#) = "continually energizing") in you, both to **will** \*([thelo](#) = exercising one's will as from a motive of desire - thus to wish or want to do something, to resolve thus expressing purpose as here in Acts 19:21) and to **work** ([energeo](#) in [present tense](#)) for His good pleasure." (Php 2:13NLT+) In other words the Spirit was continually *energizing* Paul's thoughts directing his "will" toward a certain direction and at the same time giving him the

supernatural "energy" to carry it to completion. (See also Acts 20:22-24+ where Paul uses his "spirit" working with the "Holy Spirit.")

Paul is contemplating a more extensive missionary journey than any before undertaken. He will return to Jerusalem with the collection from Greece, and then, on his way to Spain, he will visit the Roman Christians. Although those plans were revised by imprisonment in Jerusalem, the end result was the same: Paul saw Rome (cf. Acts 28:1-31+). Strong tradition and some evidence suggest that after release from prison in Rome he did travel to Spain in missionary activity - interesting. Won't it be fun speaking with Paul in Heaven!

**To go to Jerusalem after he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome** - Here in Acts Luke does not record Paul's reason for wanting to go to Jerusalem but it is clear from his writing to the Romans that his visit was to bring a collection from Macedonia and Achaia (see **verses 26-27** in following quotation). Then after Jerusalem Paul planned to go on to **Rome** and from there on to **Spain** (Ro 15:28). Paul's journey to his journey to Jerusalem occupies the next two chapters in Acts - Acts 20:1-21:16. Paul's intent to go to Jerusalem recalls a similar mindset of His Lord recorded by Luke - "When the days were approaching for His ascension, He was determined to go to Jerusalem." (Lk 9:51+)

The letter to Romans gives us a commentary on Paul's desire in Acts 19:21

**23** but now, with no further place for me in these regions (SPEAKING OF ASIA, MACEDONIA, ACHAIA), and since I have had for many years a longing to come to you (SAINTS IN ROME) **24** whenever I go to Spain—for I hope to see you in passing, and to be helped on my way there by you, when I have first enjoyed your company for a while— **25** but now, I am going to Jerusalem serving the saints. **26** For (EXPLAINS WHAT HE MEANS BY "SERVING THE SAINTS" IN JERUSALEM) Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. **27** Yes, they were pleased to do so, and they (SAINTS IN MACEDONIA AND ACHAIA) are indebted to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in their (JERUSALEM'S) spiritual things, they are indebted to minister to them also in material things. **28** Therefore, when I have finished this, and have put my seal on this fruit of theirs, I will go on by way of you to Spain. (Ro 15:23-28+)

**MacArthur** - Before describing the chaos of the riot, Luke gives a brief note on Paul's plans. As his three-year ministry in Ephesus drew to a close, the apostle made plans to go to Jerusalem by way of **Macedonia and Achaia**. His itinerary seems puzzling, since **Macedonia and Achaia** were in the opposite direction from Jerusalem. Further, he had just ministered in those regions before coming to Ephesus (Acts 18:23). But Paul had a definite plan in mind, one that reveals his deep concern for the unity of the church. Many in the church at Jerusalem were poor and in need of sustained financial assistance. To meet that need, Paul wanted to take to Jerusalem with him a love offering from the largely Gentile churches he had founded. Before returning to Jerusalem, he revisited Macedonia and Achaia to collect that offering (Ro 15:25-27; 1 Cor 16:1-4; 2 Cor 8-9). By contributing to the financial needs of the Jewish believers at Jerusalem, those Gentiles would emphasize the church's unity (cf. 1 Cor. 12:26), while confirming in a very practical way their love for their Jewish brethren. (Ibid)

#### Related Resources:

- [Why is giving so emphasized in the Christian faith?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about giving to the poor?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about generosity?](#)
- [How can I become a more cheerful giver?](#)
- [What is the difference between tithes and offerings?](#)
- [What was the firstfruits offering? Should Christians give a firstfruits offering today?](#)
- [What does Jesus want us to learn from what He said about the widow's mite?](#)
- [What does it mean that we should not let our left hand know what our right hand is doing \(Matthew 6:3-4\)?](#)
- [How should Christians respond to global poverty and hunger?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about being homeless / homelessness?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about feeding the hungry?](#)

**A T Robertson** - This was the way that he actually went, but originally he had planned to go to Achaia (Corinth) and then to Macedonia, as he says in 2 Cor. 1:15-16, but he had now changed that purpose, perhaps because of the bad news from Corinth. Already when he wrote 1 Corinthians he proposed to go first to Macedonia (1 Cor. 16:5-7). He even hoped to spend the winter in Corinth "if the Lord permit" and to remain in Ephesus till Pentecost, neither of which things he did.

**Guzik** writes that Paul had plans to go to Jerusalem and then Rome and "yet things did not work out according to his plans. He did go to Rome, yet not as a missionary on his way to Spain. He went to Rome as a prisoner awaiting trial before Caesar, where he would preach the gospel on a different kind of frontier. God had unexpected frontiers for the Gospel in Paul's life, giving him unexpected access to preach to the emperor of Rome himself. **After his release from the Roman imprisonment at the end of the**

**Book of Acts, we have reason to believe that Paul did in fact make it to Spain and preached the gospel there.** (The Enduring Word Commentary Series)

**James Anderson** sums up this transitional passage and Paul's subsequent journeys (there is some repetition of the preceding material but it is probably worthwhile as this section can be somewhat confusing regarding timing of events) -

News had reached him *"I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe's people, that there are quarrels among you"* (1 Cor 1:11), and that there was trouble in Corinth, regarding divisions, immorality, the misuse of spiritual gifts, and doctrine. Hence he wrote the **First Epistle to the Corinthians from Ephesus** to correct them. He wrote later *"We think you ought to know, dear brothers and sisters, about the trouble we went through in the province of Asia. We were crushed and overwhelmed beyond our ability to endure, and we thought we would never live through it."* (2Co 1:8NLT). Such was the state of his soul as he contemplated this trouble in Corinth. He intended to go to Corinth *"I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills"* (1 Cor 4:19), with a rod or in love. But he would not go until he heard of the effects of the First Epistle upon the Corinthians. He awaited the return of Titus with news. He moved on to **Troas**, but still Titus had not arrived, and he had no rest in his spirit as if he could not preach there although the door was opened by the Lord (2 Cor 2:12-13). So he passed over into **Macedonia**, where at last he met Titus, who brought good news of the Corinthians' repentance ( - *"But God, who comforts the depressed, comforted us by the coming of Titus; 7 and not only by his coming, but also by the comfort with which he was comforted in you, as he reported to us your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me; so that I rejoiced even more....13 For this reason we have been comforted. And besides our comfort, we rejoiced even much more for the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all."*)(2 Cor 7:6, 7, 13). He therefore wrote Second Corinthians to precede him down to Corinth, the first nine chapters referring to the majority who had repented, but the last four chapters referring to the minority who would not repent. In 2 Cor 8:1-9:27 he took the opportunity to remind the Corinthians about the collection being gathered for the poor believers in Jerusalem. Exactly what happened when he finally reached Corinth we are not told; Acts 20:2-3 refer to this visit lasting three months (*"When he had gone through those districts and had given them much exhortation, he came to Greece. 3 And there he spent three months, and when a plot was formed against him by the Jews as he was about to set sail for Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia."* - Acts 20:2-3). Paul's plans are similarly found in Ro 15:23-28, an epistle written from Corinth. He wrote that he would go first to Jerusalem (Ro 15:25), and then he would "come by you into Spain" (Ro 15:28). His visit to Jerusalem would be to take the gifts from the Galatian churches, from the Macedonian churches and from Corinth. Then he would proceed to Spain via Rome—a journey that would have taken months by sea. He planned "by the will of God" (Ro 15:32), but the divine will was quite different for His servant. Instead he would be taken prisoner in Jerusalem, kept in **Caesarea** for several years, and then he would arrive in **Rome** still as a prisoner. Prayers are not always answered according to one's asking, for Paul asked the Romans to pray that he might *"that I may be rescued from those who are disobedient in Judea"* (Ro 15:31), but this was not to be so in the will of God. (What the Bible teaches – Acts and James)

**Acts 19:22 And having sent into Macedonia two of those who ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while.**

NET Acts 19:22 So after sending two of his assistants, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, he himself stayed on for a while in the province of Asia.

GNT Acts 19:22 ποστε λας δ ες τν Μακεδον αν δ ο τν διακονοντων ατ, Τιμ θεον κα ραστον, ατς π σχεν χρ νον ες τν σ αν.

NLT Acts 19:22 He sent his two assistants, Timothy and Erastus, ahead to Macedonia while he stayed awhile longer in the province of Asia.

KJV 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.

ESV Acts 19:22 And having sent into Macedonia two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while.

ASV Acts 19:22 And having sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while.

CSB Acts 19:22 So after sending two of those who assisted him, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, he himself stayed in Asia for a while.

NIV Acts 19:22 He sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, while he stayed in the province of Asia a little longer.

NKJ Acts 19:22 So he sent into Macedonia two of those who ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus, but he himself stayed in Asia for a time.

NRS Acts 19:22 So he sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, while he himself stayed for some time longer in Asia.

YLT Acts 19:22 and having sent to Macedonia two of those ministering to him -- Timotheus and Erastus -- he himself stayed a time in Asia.

- **And having sent into Macedonia** - Ac 16:9,10 18:5 20:1 2Co 1:16 2:13 8:1 11:9 1Th 1:8
- **those who ministered to him** - Ac 13:5 16:3
- **Erastus**: Ro 16:23 2Ti 4:20
- [Acts 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**And having sent into Macedonia two of those who ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus**- The last time Luke had mentioned Timothy was in Acts 18:5+ "**when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia**" It is interesting that clearly Timothy was with Paul in much of this 3 year period in Ephesus and yet Luke makes no mention of his presence or his duties. Also exactly when during his 3 year stay in Ephesus that Paul sent them to Macedonia is not clear. While not definitively stated their mission was likely to facilitate the collection of funds to be carried to Jerusalem by Paul once he arrived (see Acts 20:1-2).

One other interesting note that **Silas** who had been mentioned multiple times in Acts 15-18 is not mentioned again after his last appearance being in Acts 18:5 when he and Timothy came from Macedonia to Corinth freeing up Paul to give full time to the Gospel.

Silas in Acts - Acts 15:22; Acts 15:27; Acts 15:32; Acts 15:34; Acts 15:40; Acts 16:19; Acts 16:25; Acts 16:29; Acts 17:4; Acts 17:10; Acts 17:14; Acts 17:15

**Longenecker** commenting on Luke's omission of Silas after Acts 18:5 points out that "But while Luke's interest in the last chapters of Acts is focused solely on his hero Paul, that is no reason for us to assume that others were no longer with Paul. For example, Titus is not mentioned at all by Luke, but Paul refers to him as having been extensively involved at various times during the Gentile mission (cf. 2Cor 2:13; 7:6, 13-14; 8:6, 16, 23; 12:18; Gal 2:1, 3; 2Tim 4:10; Titus 1:4). (Ibid)

**Erastus** is mentioned only 3 times in the NT.

Ro 16:23+ Gaius, host to me and to the whole church, greets you. **Erastus, the city treasurer greets you,** and Quartus, the brother.

2 Ti 4:20+ **Erastus remained at Corinth**, but Trophimus I left sick at Miletus.

I am unsure how to resolve comments by some like **Longenecker** who does not think the Erastus in Romans 16:23 is the same man as here in Acts 19:22 writing "This is the first time we hear of Erastus, though in 2 Timothy 4:20 he is spoken of as a well-known companion of Paul's who had a special interest in the church at Corinth. That he was the treasurer of Corinth referred to in Romans 16:23, however, is not at all likely. (**ED: HE GIVES NO REASON FOR A FAIRLY DOGMATIC STATEMENT!**) (The Expositor's Bible Commentary – Volume 9: John and Acts)

**Kistemaker** comments that "In 1930, archaeologists in Corinth discovered a slab of pavement stone that bears the inscription, "Erastus, commissioner of public works, sustained the cost for this pavement." We do not know whether all these references are to the same person or to more than one man." (Baker New Testament Commentary – Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles)

**He himself stayed in Asia for a while**- This stay would include the mob scene described in Acts 19:23-41. We cannot be sure how long he was without Timothy and Erastus, but clearly he was not alone for there are **disciples** with him (Acts 19:30).

**Robertson** - The reason for Paul's delay is given by him in 1 Cor. 16:8-9, the great door wide open in Ephesus. Here again Luke and Paul supplement each other. Pentecost came towards the end of May and May was the month of the festival of Artemis (Diana) when great multitudes would come to Ephesus. But he did not remain till Pentecost as both Luke and Paul make plain.

**Kistemaker** - The discord in the Corinthian church kept Paul in Ephesus.



## Related Resources:

- [Erastus of Corinth](#) - Henry Cadbury - 17 page paper
- [Wikipedia - Erastus of Corinth](#)
- American Tract Society [Erastus](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Erastus](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Erastus](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Erastus](#)
- Hitchcock Bible Names [Erastus](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Erastus](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Erastus](#)
- People's Dictionary of the Bible [Erastus](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Erastus](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Erastus](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Erastus](#)
- The Nuttall Encyclopedia [Erastus](#)

## Acts 19:23 About that time there occurred no small disturbance concerning the Way.

NET Acts 19:23 At that time a great disturbance took place concerning the Way.

GNT Acts 19:23 γνετο δ κατ τ ν καιρ ν κε νον τ ραχος ο κ λ γος περ τ ς δο .

NLT Acts 19:23 About that time, serious trouble developed in Ephesus concerning the Way.

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

ESV Acts 19:23 About that time there arose no little disturbance concerning the Way.

ASV Acts 19:23 And about that time there arose no small stir concerning the Way.

CSB Acts 19:23 During that time there was a major disturbance about the Way.

NIV Acts 19:23 About that time there arose a great disturbance about the Way.

NKJ Acts 19:23 And about that time there arose a great commotion about the Way.

NRS Acts 19:23 About that time no little disturbance broke out concerning the Way.

YLT Acts 19:23 And there came, at that time, not a little stir about the way,

- **there occurred no small disturbance** 2Co 1:8-10 6:9
- **the Way:** Ac 19:9 9:2 18:26 22:4 24:14,22
- [Acts 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## NO SMALL DISTURBANCE

Luke now proceeds to show why an [incendiary](#) situation gave Paul an incentive to evacuate Ephesus.

**MacArthur** writes "He delayed all his travel plans temporarily because, as he wrote at this time to the Corinthians, "I shall remain in Ephesus until Pentecost; for a wide door for effective service has opened to me, and there are many adversaries" (1 Cor. 16:8-9). Those adversaries soon made themselves known, as a riot erupted in Ephesus over the success of Paul's ministry....The unseen cause of the riot was the satanic realm's antagonism to the prevailing of the Word (Acts 19:20). Demons stirred up human agents to oppose the gospel, which was spreading rapidly throughout the province of Asia (Acts 19:26; cf. Acts 19:10). (MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Acts)

**About that time** - Literally "There happened at that time." This is a favorite introductory phrase of Luke = 69x in Gospel and 54x in Acts. Specifically this was before Paul had left Ephesus to visit the churches in Macedonia.

**Time** (season, proper time) (2540)([kairos](#)) can describe a season or a favorable time, in this context the opposition to the Gospel and the Way was clearly rising creating a "favorable time" for potentially unfavorable events for Paul and the believers. Of course the Sovereign God allowed this "favorable" time for He is ever in



control of every [kairos](#) moment!

**There occurred no small disturbance** - This idiomatic statement is identical to Acts 12:18+ "Now when day came, **there was no small disturbance** among the soldiers as to what could have become of Peter." See another [litotes](#) below!

**Disturbance** (5017)(**tarachos** from [tarasso](#) - stir up, agitate, cause trouble) is used only twice in NT (Acts 12:18; 19:23) and is a noun that means commotion, confusion, [consternation](#), serious disturbance. **Louw-Nida** says "a state of acute distress and great anxiety, with the additional possible implications of dismay and confusion." Acts 12:18 speaks more of mental agitation, consternation and acute distress of the soldiers when Peter was not found in prison (Why? because they knew it would result in their execution - Acts 12:19!). Acts 19:23 speaks more of a state of civic unrest. **Commotion** refers to a disorderly outburst or tumult, a condition of civil unrest or insurrection, mental excitement or confusion.

**Uttley** on Luke's [understatement](#) **no small disturbance** -This phrase is characteristic of Luke's writing (cf. Acts 14:28; 15:2; 17:4, 12; 19:23, 24; 27:20). The [understatement](#) accentuates the event (**ED**: See the figure of speech known as [litotes](#)).

**Robertson** - [Litotes](#) ([ouk = "no" + oligos = "little, small"]), occurs eight times in the Acts as in 15:2, and nowhere else in the N. T. (See Acts 12:18; Acts 14:28 ("a long time" = literally no little time); Acts 15:2 ("great dissension" = no little dissension); Acts 17:4 ("large number"); Acts 17:12 ("a number of prominent Greek women"); Acts 19:23 ("no small disturbance"); Acts 19:24 ("no little business"); Acts 27:20 ("no small storm")).

**Zodhiates** on **tarachos** - In the NT, it means consternation, trepidation resulting from fear (Acts 12:18; Sept.: 1 Sam. 5:9), as also resulting from excitement, tumult and contention (Acts 19:23). (Complete Word Study Dictionary – New Testament)

**Tarachos** in the **Septuagint** - Jdg. 11:35; 1 Sa 5:9; Est. 1:1;

After they had brought it around, the hand of the LORD was against the city with very great **confusion**; and He smote the men of the city, both young and old, so that tumors broke out on them.

**Concerning the Way** - Concerning the believers in Jesus. See [preceding comments](#) on "The Way."

**J Vernon McGee** adds that "Christianity had no name for the churches at that time -- certainly no denominational name. It was simply called "that way." It was a new way, that is certain." (Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee)

**Steven Cole** - I have never been caught in the midst of a riot, much less been the target of one. But I have read of Hudson and Maria Taylor's harrowing experience in Yangchow, China, when an angry, drunk mob attacked their house and tried to set fire to it, and it doesn't sound enjoyable (see Roger Steer, *J. Hudson Taylor* [OMF], pp. 217-224)! Somehow God miraculously spared them and their children from permanent injury and death, although Maria, who was six months pregnant, had to jump out of a second story window to escape. **If you've never read the story of [Hudson Taylor and the China Inland Mission](#), you are lacking a profound spiritual experience!**

#### Related Resources:

- [Audio of Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret](#)(10 youtube videos)
- Book - [Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret](#) ([Another source](#))

**Cole** concludes by asking some probing questions - Have we burned our idols and cut off our ties with our old life of sin? Surveys show that those who profess to be evangelical Christians watch the same amount of TV and the same TV shows as the population at large. What if all who profess to know Christ stopped watching the filthy TV shows and spent the time studying their Bibles? What if Christians refused to go to or rent questionable movies or videos? Would Hollywood feel the loss of business? What if Christian young people kept themselves morally pure until marriage? What if Christians who were married kept their marriage vows and worked through their problems rather than get divorced? (There is currently no difference in divorce statistics between Christians and the general public.) What if Christians stopped squandering their wealth on frivolous toys and luxurious living and started living and giving sacrificially toward world missions? Would these things impact our culture? Would unbelievers begin to see the effects of the gospel in our lives and be convicted of their sins? Would the Way of Jesus Christ begin to cause no small disturbance in the United States?

---

**Jack Arnold** introduces his sermon on this section of Acts describing pagan persecution of the powerful effects of the Gospel - How have our lives changed the world we live in? God in His providence has caused each one of us to live in the western culture, and the American culture in particular. How have we changed our culture? We know that Christ not only changes lives, but Christ also changes culture. When Christ saves a man or woman, a person begins to develop a Christian world-life viewpoint, and this

Christian philosophy begins to make an impact upon our atheistic, materialistic and humanistic society. Since Christ lives in us, how have we affected the world we live in? Christ changes culture so as to make a culture face Christ realistically. Christ changes culture by first changing men on the inside who begin to live for Christ and operate on a biblical morality based on absolutes. Men and women, with Christ in their lives, begin to affect society in the area of politics, law, economics, music, morality, art and even religion. Christ's philosophy is in opposition to the world's philosophy and there is often open conflict between the forces of darkness and the forces of light. Christianity is revolutionary and it is a very dangerous faith. If you do not think so, you have not yet begun to live it. Someone has said that a Christian is one who is completely fearless, continually cheerful and constantly in trouble. Let us remember it is Christ's desire that Christians should shape, mold and make an impact on culture, and that godless, humanistic culture should not mold Christians. ([Sermon](#))

**Acts 19:24 For a man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis, was bringing no little business to the craftsmen;**

NET Acts 19:24 For a man named Demetrius, a silversmith who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought a great deal of business to the craftsmen.

GNT Acts 19:24 Δημιτριος γρ τις ν ματι, ργυροκπος, ποι ν ναο ς ργυρο ς ρτμιδος παρε χετο το ς τεχνταις ο κ λην ργασαν,

NLT Acts 19:24 It began with Demetrius, a silversmith who had a large business manufacturing silver shrines of the Greek goddess Artemis. He kept many craftsmen busy.

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

ESV Acts 19:24 For a man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought no little business to the craftsmen.

ASV Acts 19:24 For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Diana, brought no little business unto the craftsmen;

CSB Acts 19:24 For a person named Demetrius, a silversmith who made silver shrines of Artemis, provided a great deal of business for the craftsmen.

NIV Acts 19:24 A silversmith named Demetrius, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought in no little business for the craftsmen.

NKJ Acts 19:24 For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Diana, brought no small profit to the craftsmen.

NRS Acts 19:24 A man named Demetrius, a silversmith who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought no little business to the artisans.

YLT Acts 19:24 for a certain one, Demetrius by name, a worker in silver, making silver sanctuaries of Artemis, was bringing to the artificers gain not a little,

- **who made silver shrines of Artemis** (Diana) - Ac 19:27,28,34,35
- **was bringing no little business to the craftsmen** - Ac 16:16 Isa 56:11,12 1Ti 6:9,10
- [Acts 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **IDOLATRY WAS BIG BUSINESS IN EPHEBUS**

**For a man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis** - In other words, Demetrius was a maker of idols (cf 1 Co 10:19-20, Dt 32:31). Luke's use of naos (below) indicates these "shrines" likely included replicas of the huge temple just outside the city of Ephesus, where the statue of Artemis was situated. As Demetrius was a common name there is little likelihood that this was the same man mentioned by John whose character seems to be the antithesis of this Ephesian idol maker - "**Demetrius** has received a good testimony from everyone, and from the truth itself; and we add our testimony, and you know that our testimony is true." (3 John 12)

**Shrines** ([3485](#))([naos](#)) in the Greek culture denoted the "abode of the gods" and was used to refer to a literal

structure or building associated with, dedicated to and set apart to be a dwelling place for a deity. either pagan gods like Artemis (cf Acts 17:24) which are counterfeits of the true God (Mt 23:16). **Naos** describes the place where a deity was worshipped (cp Zacharias ministering to God in Lk 1:9). So you can picture the pagans carrying around these little **shrines** and placing them in their homes and offering them as [votive](#) (think "vow") offerings in her Temple. Things have not changed much -- we have many today who practice "religion" through use of religious shrines and rituals. How sad when the writer of Hebrews says that we don't need shrines, we simply need to enter boldly by faith into the sanctuary!

Therefore, brethren, since **we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus** 20 by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, (Hebrews 10:19-20<sup>+</sup>)

And **Paul** affirms our access to the Holy of holies...

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. (Ro 5:1-2<sup>+</sup>)

**Artemis** - **Robertson** adds this qualifier "It is a pity that the Revised Version renders **Artemis** here (ED: FERTILITY GODDESS IN EPHEBUS). Diana as the Ephesian Artemis is quite distinct from the [Greek Artemis](#), the sister of Apollo, the Diana of the Romans (ED: THIS ARTEMIS WAS "GODDESS OF THE HUNT" - [see picture of her with bow](#)). This temple, built in the 6th century B.C., was burnt by Herostratus Oct. 13 B.C. 356, the night when Alexander the Great was born. It was restored and was considered one of the seven wonders of the world. Artemis was worshipped as the goddess of fertility, like the Lydian Cybele, a figure with many breasts. The great festival in May would offer Demetrius a golden opportunity for the sale of the shrines."

**Uteley** writes that **shrines** "refers to small silver images (1) of the Temple of Artemis or (2) the meteorite which looked like a multi-breasted woman. Archaeology has found many silver images of this goddess, but none of the shrine (temple) itself. It was one of the seven wonders of the world. Its base was 100 feet by 340 feet. It had 177 columns that were 55 feet tall and 6 feet thick. It was four times larger than the Partheon in Athens "

**Vincent** on the **shrines** - Small models of the temple of Diana, containing an image of the goddess. They were purchased by pilgrims to the temple, just as rosaries and images of the Virgin are bought by pilgrims to Lourdes, or bronze models of Trajan's column or of the Colonne Vendôme by tourists to Rome or Paris

Replica of Temple of Artemis

### [Temple of Artemis \(Diana\) in Ephesus](#) -

The **Temple of Artemis** or **Artemision**, also known less precisely as the **Temple of Diana**, was a [Greek temple](#) dedicated to an ancient, local form of the goddess [Artemis](#) (associated with [Diana](#), a Roman goddess). It was located in [Ephesus](#) (near the modern town of [Selçuk](#) in present-day [Turkey](#)). It was completely rebuilt twice, once after a devastating flood and three hundred years later after an act of arson, and in its final form was one of the [Seven Wonders of the Ancient World](#). By 401 AD it had been ruined or destroyed.<sup>[1]</sup> Only foundations and fragments of the last temple remain at the site.

From the Greek point of view, the **Ephesian Artemis** is a distinctive form of their goddess [Artemis](#). In Greek cult and myth, Artemis is the twin of [Apollo](#), a virgin huntress who supplanted the [Titan Selene](#) as goddess of the [Moon](#). At Ephesus, a goddess whom the Greeks associated with Artemis was venerated in an archaic, pre-Hellenic [cult image](#)<sup>[38]</sup> that was carved of wood (a [xoanon](#)) and kept decorated with jewelry. The features are most similar to Near-Eastern and Egyptian deities, and least similar to Greek ones. The body and legs are enclosed within a tapering pillar-like [term](#), from which the goddess' feet protrude. On the coins minted at Ephesus, the goddess wears a [mural crown](#) (like a city's walls), an attribute of [Cybele](#) as a protector of cities (see [polos](#)).<sup>[38]</sup>

The Hideous Statue of Artemis

**Constable** on the Temple of Artemis (Diana) - The temple of Diana in Ephesus was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, and many historians believe it was one of the most beautiful buildings ever built. It stood about a mile northeast of the city and served as a bank as well as a place of worship and cultic immorality. It could accommodate 50,000 people (OTHERS SAY 25,000) and was probably the largest Greek temple ever built. Its centerpiece was evidently a meteorite that resembled a woman with many breasts. Other meteorites that became sacred cult objects were at Troy, Pessinus, Enna, and Emeas. See Longenecker,

**Herschel Ford** wrote, "During the construction of the building any prince counted it a great honor to be allowed to erect one of these pillars. Alexander the Great offered to pay the entire cost of the temple if they would inscribe his name upon it. These offers were refused, but thousands of people contributed to the cost. The greatest painters were proud to have their pictures in the temple and the greatest sculptors vied for the privilege of placing their statues in it."

**Polhill on Artemis** - The famous statue of Artemis, the centerpiece of her temple, was noted for the mysterious terms engraved on the crown, girdle, and feet of the image. Referred to as the "Ephesian scripts," ([Ephesia grammata](#)) this magical [gibberish](#) was considered to have great power. (NAC)

**McGee** - The temple of Diana was a great pagan temple, and it was the center of business. It was the bank of that day. It was also the center of sin. Gross immorality took place around it. It is true that religion can go to a lower level than anything else. (Ibid)

**Was bringing no little business to the craftsmen** - **Was bringing** is in the [imperfect tense](#) indicating this was an ongoing business, day in and day out. Once again Luke shows his affinity for using [litotes](#) (see [preceding passage](#)), **no little business**, a figure of speech in which he makes an understatement to emphasize the success of the idolatry business. In other words Luke makes his point by stating a negative to further affirm the positive.

**William Barclay** - When pilgrims came to Ephesus they liked to take a souvenir home. These silversmiths were makers of little silver model shrines which were bought and sold as souvenirs.

**MacArthur** gives some historical context to help understand why shrines to Artemis were such a big money making business in Ephesus - The worship of the goddess Artemis was widespread throughout the Roman Empire. There appears to have been at least thirty-three shrines to Artemis throughout the Roman Empire, making it perhaps the most popular cult of all. Ephesus, site of the impressive Temple of Artemis (one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World), was the center of Artemis worship. Pilgrims flocked to the city, especially during the annual festival to Artemis held each spring. The trade generated by this influx of pilgrims was an essential part of the Ephesian economy. It is likely that the riot described in this passage took place during that festival, at the peak season for the sale of the paraphernalia of Artemis.(Ibid)

**Was bringing** (furnishing, providing)([3930](#))([parecho](#) from **para** = near, beside + **echo** = hold) basically (literally) means to hold beside, To hold out toward someone, to present, offer. to cause someone to experience something.

**NET Note** - The charge that Christianity brought economic and/or social upheaval was made a number of times in Acts: 16:20–21; Acts 17:6–7; Acts 18:13.

**Business** ([2039](#))([ergasia](#) from **ergázomai** = to toil, work) means to engage in some type of activity or behavior with sustained interest and thus describes a pursuit. **Ergasia** in the present context means a pursuit for profit. Men like Demetrius were playing on the superstitious nature of the pagans in Ephesus and it was paying off!

**Robertson** notes that "[Trade guilds](#) were common in the ancient world. Demetrius had probably organized this guild and provided the capital for the enterprise."

**Craftsman** ([5079](#))(**technites** from **techne** = art, trade, craft) refers to an [artisan](#), designer, craftsman, one who customarily engages in a particular craft or occupation. In Hebrews 11:10 the writer uses technites figuratively of God in describing "the city which has foundations, whose **architect** and builder is God.

**Vine** - It is found elsewhere in Heb. 11:10 "builder;" but this is practically the same as "maker" (dēmiourgos). Trench, Syn. cv., suggests that technitēs brings out the artistic side of creation, viewing God as "moulding and fashioning ... the materials which He called into existence." This agrees with the usage of the word in the Sept.

**Gilbrant** - Throughout classical Greek **technitēs** was a term used to describe a variety of skilled craftsmen such as engravers, wood-carvers, stonemasons, and potters (cf. Liddell-Scott). In general, technitēs referred to any number of skilled individuals— artists, musicians, designers, etc. A second-or third-century document (Dio Cassius 63.29) supposedly records the words of Nero just prior to his suicide (a fatal stab wound into the throat): "Hoios **technitēs** parapollumai"; that is, "O what a great artist I am wasting (destroying)" (cf. Latin = "qualis artifex pereo"; ibid.). Although a rare figurative use translates the word as "trickster" (one skilled in trickery), the most common meaning is a "**craftsman**." The Septuagint translates three Hebrew terms as technitēs: chātsav (a hewer of stones—2 Kings 12:12 [LXX 4 Kings 12:12]), 'ommān (a master workman, an artist—Song of Solomon 7:1,2), chārāsh (an engraver, a woodworker—Jeremiah 10:9, 24:1). The common classical meaning is evident in each Septuagintal occurrence. ([Complete Biblical Library Greek-English](#)

**Technites** - 4x - architect(1), craftsman(1), craftsmen(2). - Acts 19:24; Acts 19:38; Heb. 11:10; Rev. 18:22

**Technites** in the **Septuagint** - Deut. 27:15; 1 Chr. 22:15; 1 Chr. 29:5; Song. 7:1; Jer. 10:9; Jer. 24:1; Jer. 29:2

**Longenecker** gives us background to help set the context for the events that follow especially the reaction to Paul's denigration of Artemis - The second factor the life of Ephesus depended on was the worship of Artemis (the Lat. Diana), the multi-breasted goddess of fertility ([statue](#)) whose [temple](#) was one of [the Seven Wonders of the ancient world](#) (see [timeline and locations](#)). The relation of [Artemis of Ephesus](#) to the [Greek goddess Artemis](#) is very vague. Though in their distinctive characteristics they were quite different, in the popular, mind they were often equated. [King Croesus](#) of nearby Lydia (reigned 564-546 B.C.) built the first temple to Artemis one and a half miles northeast of Ephesus. It was rebuilt on the same site in the fourth century B.C. after having been set on fire in 356 B.C. This temple was almost four times the size of the [Parthenon at Athens](#) and stood till the [Goths sacked Ephesus](#) in A.D. 263. With the decline of its commerce, the prosperity of Ephesus became more and more dependent on the tourist and pilgrim trade associated with the temple and cult of Artemis. At the time of Paul's arrival, the people of Ephesus, while surrounded by signs of past wealth and still enjoying many of its fruits, were becoming conscious of the precariousness of their position as a commercial and political center of Asia and were turning more toward the temple of Artemis in support of their economy. (Expositor's Bible Commentary – Volume 9: John and Acts)

**Acts 19:25 these he gathered together with the workmen of similar trades, and said, "Men, you know that our prosperity depends upon this business.**

NET Acts 19:25 He gathered these together, along with the workmen in similar trades, and said, "Men, you know that our prosperity comes from this business.

GNT Acts 19:25 ο ς συναθρο σας κα το ς περ τ τοια τα ργ τας ε πεν, νδρεϲ, π στασθε τι κ τα της τ ς ργασ ας ε πορ α μ ν στιν

NLT Acts 19:25 He called them together, along with others employed in similar trades, and addressed them as follows:"Gentlemen, you know that our wealth comes from this business.

KJV 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.

ESV Acts 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.

ASV Acts 19:25 whom he gathered together, with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this business we have our wealth.

CSB Acts 19:25 When he had assembled them, as well as the workers engaged in this type of business, he said: "Men, you know that our prosperity is derived from this business.

NIV Acts 19:25 He called them together, along with the workmen in related trades, and said: "Men, you know we receive a good income from this business.

NKJ Acts 19:25 He called them together with the workers of similar occupation, and said: "Men, you know that we have our prosperity by this trade.

NRS Acts 19:25 These he gathered together, with the workers of the same trade, and said, "Men, you know that we get our wealth from this business.

YLT Acts 19:25 whom, having brought in a crowd together, and those who did work about such things, he said, 'Men, ye know that by this work we have our wealth;

- **Men, you know that our prosperity depends upon this business** - Ac 16:19 Ho 4:8 12:7,8 2Pe 2:3 Rev 18:3,11-19
- [Acts 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**DEMETRIUS GATHERS THE EPHESIAN  
"CHAMBER OF COMMERCE"**



In Acts most of the protests against Christianity come from the Jews over religious matters, but here we find one of the two Gentile protests against Christianity (Acts 16:16-24+) and both of these latter are related to financial matters. "The profit motive still opposes the spread of the Gospel." (Constable)

Always pithy **J Vernon McGee** quips "you cannot step on a man's pocketbook without hearing him say, 'Ouch!'" (Amen or Oh my!)

**These he gathered together with the workmen of similar trades**- The collusion among the members of the "chamber of commerce" will bring conflict and then confusion (mob scene). This would undoubtedly include not just the silversmiths but those who created the terra cotta shrines (of which a number have been found in [archaeological digs](#)).

**Trades** (crafts)([5078](#))(**techne** from **tikto** = to bring forth) refers to an art, a trade, craft, skill, occupation, some an activity involving specialized training and skill. **Gilbrant** says "It is derived from **tektōn**, a "craftsman in wood, stone, or metal." **Robertson** quips "It was a gathering of the associated trades, not for a strike, for employer and employees met together, but in protest against the preaching of Paul."

**Blaiklock** has an interesting note on these similar trades or guilds - "The guilds, and the problem they presented to the non-conforming Christian, haunt the background of the New Testament. They were societies not trade unions, primarily social, and multitudinous in ancient society. Records exist of guilds of bankers, doctors, architects, producers of woollen and linen goods, dyers, workers in metal, stone or clay, builders, carpenters, pastry cooks, barbers, embalmers and transport workers." ([The Acts of the Apostles: An Introduction and Commentary](#))

**Constable** comments that "Demetrius' words establish the extent to which the gospel had penetrated Asia and the effect it had. There is no stronger testimony than the words of a critic who acknowledges the success of his adversary."

**And said, "Men, you know that our prosperity depends upon this business** - When the Gospel begins to threaten one's pocket book, fireworks are soon to follow. One is reminded of Jesus' sobering question "What does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?" (Mk 8:36) These men had rejected the knowledge of God and fallen into the trap of idolatry and made a very bad exchange (as they would discover one day in eternity!) as described by Paul in Romans

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. 21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and **exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.** (Ro 1:18-23+)

**Know** (present tense)([1987](#))(**epistamai** from **epi** = upon + **histemi** = to stand) means that they had fixed their minds on this economic problem and thus had intellectual apprehension and understanding of the significance of this information. In a word it meant "Bad for business!"

**Jack Arnold** - This is a tremendous testimony to the power of Christ to change lives and destroy idols. Christ does the same thing with modern idols. Whether those idols be material things, drugs, sex, alcohol or whatever these idols will topple when men meet the resurrected Christ. Each time a person comes to Christ for salvation, he affects his culture, and if enough people turn to the Savior, a whole culture can be changed. ([Sermon](#))

**Prosperity** (2142)(**euporia** from **euporeo** = to have plenty of anything from **eu** + **poros** = easy to pass through, easy to accomplish and so well off) means abundance, the result of having acquired wealth and thus wealth, good income, easy living. In short **euporia** speaks of a high standard of living achieved through one's work, whether that work is easy or hard. **BDAG** = "having the means for something, 'means', then abundant means." Louw-Nida - "an easy means of gaining a profit from one's business." This is the only use in the Bible. **Liddell-Scott** - an easy way of doing a thing, facility or faculty for doing, c. inf., Thuc.; absol., Xen.: easy means of providing, Thuc., etc. 2. plenty, store, abundance, wealth, Xen.: in pl. advantages, Isocr., Dem. II. the solution of doubts or difficulties, Xen., etc.

**Business** ([2039](#)) see above [ergasia](#)

**Acts 19:26 You see and hear that not only in Ephesus, but in almost all of Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away a considerable number of people, saying that gods made with hands are no gods at all.**



NET Acts 19:26 And you see and hear that this Paul has persuaded and turned away a large crowd, not only in Ephesus but in practically all of the province of Asia, by saying that gods made by hands are not gods at all.

GNT Acts 19:26 κα θεωρε τε κα κο ετε τι ο μ νον φ σου λλ σχεδ ν π σης τ ς σ ας Πα λος ο το ς πε σας μετ σπησεν καν ν χλον λ γων τι ο κ ε σ ν θεο ο δι χειρ ν γιν μενοι.

NLT Acts 19:26 But as you have seen and heard, this man Paul has persuaded many people that handmade gods aren't really gods at all. And he's done this not only here in Ephesus but throughout the entire province!

KJV 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:

ESV Acts 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.

ASV Acts 19:26 And 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 are no gods, that are made with hands:

CSB Acts 19:26 You both see and hear that not only in Ephesus, but in almost all of Asia, this man Paul has persuaded and misled a considerable number of people by saying that gods made by hand are not gods!

NIV Acts 19:26 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 man-made gods are no gods at all.

NKJ Acts 19:26 "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.

NRS Acts 19:26 You also see and hear that not only in Ephesus but in almost the whole of Asia this Paul has persuaded and drawn away a considerable number of people by saying that gods made with hands are not gods.

YLT Acts 19:26 and ye see and hear, that not only at Ephesus, but almost in all Asia, this Paul, having persuaded, did turn away a great multitude, saying, that they are not gods who are made by hands;

- **You see and hear that not only in Ephesus** - Ac 19:10,18-20 1Co 16:8,9 1Th 1:9
- **that gods made with hands are no gods at all**- Ac 14:15 17:29 Ps 115:4-8 135:15-18 Isa 44:10-20 46:5-8 Jer 10:3-5,11,14,15 Ho 8:6 1Co 8:4 10:19,20 12:2 Ga 4:8
- **made**: Ac 19:35

**You see and hear that not only in Ephesus, but in almost all of Asia**- This is an amazing testimony to the power and penetration of the Gospel and is in a sense a "pagan commentary" on Acts 19:20+ that "the word of the Lord was growing mightily and prevailing."

**Willaim Neil** rightly says that "vested interests were disguised as local patriotism-in this case also under the cloak of religious zeal." ([The Acts of the Apostles - New Century Bible Commentary](#))

**See** ([present tense](#) -beholding, observing) (2334)([theoreo](#) from [theaomai](#) = to look at closely or attentively or contemplatively - even with a sense of wonder; cp **theoros** = a spectator) means that these businessmen were seeing, perceiving and understanding. They were looking with interest and purpose motivated by their pocket books! And so they were watching intensely or attentively, somewhat in amazement and shock at what was occurring.

**This Paul** - Demetrius is being contemptuous! **Robertson** says "Contemptuous use of houtos (this)."

**THOUGHT** - One man impacting a major Roman province! This truth should remind and encourage all of us that when God gets complete possession of one man or one woman, the supernatural fruit that results is exceeding abundantly beyond all we could ask or think (read 2 Chr 16:9). Why? Because it is **NOT** us (just as it was not Paul - read 2 Cor 3:5-6+, 1 Cor 15:10+). The explanation is supernatural - "**according to the power** ([dunamis](#)) **that works** ([energeo](#) in [present tense](#) = continually works) **within us!**" (Eph 3:20+). And what "**power**" is that? The Holy Spirit continually energizing us with [dunamis](#), inherent ability to accomplish supernaturally when it is impossible to accomplish naturally! Upon whose power are you relying - yours or His?

**Has persuaded** (3982)([peitho](#)) means that a **considerable number** who heard Paul (and presumably the same message from his disciples) had come to a **settled persuasion** concerning the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

**And turned away a considerable number of people** - The key here is a **considerable number**, for had it just been a few, their bottom lines would have been only minimally impacted.

**Robertson** adds that this testimony from a pagan was a "Tribute to Paul's powers as a preacher borne out by Luke's record in Acts 19:10....Paul had cut the nerve of their business. There had long been a Jewish colony in Ephesus, but their protest against idolatry was as nothing compared with Paul's preaching (Furneaux)."

**Turned away** (3179)(**methistemi** from **meta** = denoting change of place or condition + **histemi** =place, stand) literally means to remove or transfer from one place to another. Luke had used methistemi earlier to describe causing a change in Saul's official position "After He **had removed** him, He raised up David to be their king." (Acts 13:22). Here in Acts 19:26 methistemi conveys the sense of to bring or cause **a considerable number of people** to turn aside or "change sides" (so to speak), in this case speaking of their changing sides spiritually.

**THOUGHT** - In fact Paul uses this very word to describe what occurs in every soul that says "Yes" to Jesus and receives Him as Lord and Savior. Thus Paul writes that God "rescued us from the domain of darkness (SATAN'S KINGDOM), and **transferred** (**methistemi**) us to the kingdom of His beloved Son." (Col 1:13+) Beloved, there are only two possible kingdoms one is subject to in this life - either the Kingdom of Darkness overseen by Satan (1 Jn 5:19+). and the Kingdom of Light overseen by God. There is no middle ground. One is either a slave (and child) of the devil or a slave (**doulos** as Paul described himself in Ro 1:1+) and child of the King! Again, there are no families in between! This truth sounds harsh, but it is what the Bible teaches is true of every man and woman on earth. This stark reality begs the question - Whose side are you on - darkness or light? Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved and IMMEDIATELY transferred to the Kingdom of light! (Acts 16:31+, read Acts 26:18+). Hallelujah! Amen!

**Saying that gods made with hands are no gods at all** - This single line summarizes Paul's speech in Acts 17:22-31+! It does not take much truth to debunk the false! This is the bad exchange for light for darkness, of truth for the lie, the pathogenesis of which goes back to Genesis, when Eve bought the lie she could be like God (Ge 3:5+). And so just as Paul later taught the saints at Rome explaining that rejection of God's natural revelation has serious sequelae explaining that those who willfully reject God's grace have in effect "exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image (LIKE SHRINE TO ARTEMIS) in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. (Ro 1:23+)

This is hardly a crime and Demetrius who finally be shown to have no valid grounds for bringing accusation against the Christians (Acts 19:37+).

**Jack Arnold** - Idolatry is the height of stupidity, for men make an object with their own hands and then turn around and pray to the object asking for deliverance. What kind of God do you serve? Do you serve an idol? Do you serve a god of your own imagination? Or do you serve the one, true and living God as He is revealed in Christ Jesus? Do you bow to the God of Scripture? Does your god exist to do your will or do you exist to do God's will? Is your God the sovereign, holy, just and loving God of the Bible or is he some god you made up? ([Sermon](#))

**Robertson on made with hands** - Note the present tense, made from time to time. No doubt Paul had put the point sharply as in Athens (Acts 17:29). Isaiah (Isaiah 44:9-17) had pictured graphically the absurdity of worshipping stocks and stones, flatly forbidden by the Old Testament (Ex 20:4). The people identified their gods with the images of them and Demetrius reflects that point of view. He was jealous of the brand of gods turned out by his factory. The artisans would stand by him on this point. It was a reflection on their work.

The OT describes the utter absurdity of idolatry (see especially Ps 115:8!) So why do we are we still so attracted to them?! (see also Isa. 44:9-17; Jer. 10:3-11)

The **idols** of the nations are but silver and gold, The **work of man's hands**. 16 They have mouths, but they do not speak; They have eyes, but they do not see; 17 They have ears, but they do not hear, Nor is there any breath at all in their mouths. 18 Those who make them will be like them, Yes, everyone who trusts in them. (Psalm 135:15-18)

Their **idols** are silver and gold, The **work of man's hands**. 5 They have mouths, but they cannot speak; They have eyes, but they cannot see; 6 They have ears, but they cannot hear; They have noses, but they cannot smell; 7 They have hands, but they cannot feel; They have feet, but they cannot walk; They cannot make a sound with their throat. 8 **Those who make them will become like them, Everyone who trusts in**

**them!** (Ps. 115:4-8)

There you will serve gods, the work of man's hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell. (Deut. 4:28)"

**Acts 19:27 Not only is there danger that this trade of ours fall into disrepute, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis be regarded as worthless and that she whom all of Asia and the world worship will even be dethroned from her magnificence.**

NET Acts 19:27 There is danger not only that this business of ours will come into disrepute, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be regarded as nothing, and she whom all the province of Asia and the world worship will suffer the loss of her greatness."

GNT Acts 19:27 ο μ ν ο ν δ το το κινδυνει μ ν τ μ ρ ο ς ε ς πελεγμ ν λθε ν λ λ κ α τ τ ς μεγ λ η ς θε ς ρ τ μ ι δ ο ς ε ρ ν ε ς ο θ ν λογισθ ναι, μ λ λειν τε κ α καθαιρε σθαι τ ς μεγαλει τητο ς α τ ς ν λ η σ α κ α ο κουμ ν η σ βεται.

NLT Acts 19:27 Of course, I'm not just talking about the loss of public respect for our business. I'm also concerned that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will lose its influence and that Artemis-- this magnificent goddess worshiped throughout the province of Asia and all around the world-- will be robbed of her great prestige!"

KJV 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.

ESV Acts 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."

ASV Acts 19:27 and not only is there danger that this our trade come into disrepute; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana be made of no account, and that she should even be deposed from her magnificence whom all Asia and the world worshippeth.

CSB Acts 19:27 So not only do we run a risk that our business may be discredited, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis may be despised and her magnificence come to the verge of ruin-- the very one all of Asia and the world adore."

NIV Acts 19:27 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."

NKJ Acts 19:27 "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."

NRS Acts 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 will be scorned, and she will be deprived of her majesty that brought all Asia and the world to worship her."

YLT Acts 19:27 and not only is this department in danger for us of coming into disregard, but also, that of the great goddess Artemis the temple is to be reckoned for nothing, and also her greatness is about to be brought down, whom all Asia and the world doth worship.'

- **Not only is there danger** - Ac 19:21 Zep 2:11 Mt 23:14 1Ti 6:5
- **whom all of Asia and the world worship** : 1Jn 5:19 Rev 13:3,8
- [Acts 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **THE TRUTH EXPOSES THE FALSE**

The Gospel taught that idolatry was a lie and of no value either in time or eternity and this was Demetrius' greatest fear.

**Not only is there danger that this trade of ours fall into disrepute** - "to come into refutation or exposure." (Vincent) Demetrius rightly realized that the Gospel truth jeopardized their professions to the point that they would lose the esteem of the people and their reputations would begin to decline, and in turn their business would be seriously criticized. They felt it in their pocket book!

**There is danger** (present tense)(2793)([kinduneuo](#) from **kindunos** = danger from **kineo** = to move, put in motion) means to be in peril, to face danger or to run a risk (Lk 8:23). In the present context their profits at risk and in jeopardy. Later, because of the uproar the mob was in danger of being accused of a riot! (Acts 19:40+).

**MacArthur** comments - How typical of a depraved mind to focus on crass materialism when eternal souls are at stake! The Lord Jesus Christ exposed the folly of that type of thinking when He asked, "What does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? For what shall a man give in exchange for his soul" (Mark 8:36-37)? Hell will be filled with people who, like Judas, loved money more than God. (Ibid)

**Disrepute** (557)(**apelegmos** from **apo** = from, intensifier + **elegcho** = to reprove, refute) means a state of disgrace, discredit, censure, reproach, repudiation (of something shown worthless) and hence even contempt. Louw-Nida - "and strong criticism based upon presumed evidence." BDAG says it speaks of "criticism relating to questionable conduct."

Demetrius now shifts from appealing to their pocket book to their "hymn book" (so to speak). In other words, he appeals their sense of religious devotion to Artemis and the danger of her reputation being sullied!

**MacArthur** - Ephesus would suffer. The temple of Artemis was famous throughout the Roman world, and it had been built with gifts from many rulers. Anything that tarnished Artemis's reputation would lower Ephesus's status, hinder civic pride, and disastrously cripple the city's economy. Loyalty to Ephesus demanded that the craftsmen oppose the new religion that threatened to undermine the city's claim to fame and source of revenue. (Ibid)

**But also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis** - **Artemis** was called "The Great" and one inscription found in the ruins of Ephesus called her the "greatest god." Utter rubbish! When men turn from God, they will turn to almost anything! Demetrius is appealing to the potential loss of income because of the loss of influence of Artemis (**regarded as worthless**).

**Robertson** adds a racy note - "The priests were eunuchs and there were virgin priestesses and a lower order of slaves known as temple-sweepers (*neōkoroī*, Acts 19:35). They had wild [orgiastic](#) exercises that were disgraceful with their [Corybantic](#) processions and revelries." Corybantic means affected with or marked by frenzy or mania uncontrolled by reason. Corybantes was a Latin name of the priests of [Cybele](#), a Phrygian goddess of nature, who performed wild dances!

**Be regarded as worthless** - Literally "reckoned as nothing!" **Worthless** is the adjective from *ou* which means not and *heis* which means one, to the idea is not even one and here in the neuter means "nothing" or "not a thing." In other words that idolatry would be seen as nothing!

**Temple** (2413)([hieros](#)) conveys the basic idea of what belongs to divinity, and was the word that referred to the Temple in Jerusalem (Acts 2:46) and to pagan temples. **Heiros** in **Acts** - Acts 2:46; Acts 3:1; Acts 3:2; Acts 3:3; Acts 3:8; Acts 3:10; Acts 4:1; Acts 5:20; Acts 5:21; Acts 5:24; Acts 5:25; Acts 5:42; Acts 19:27; Acts 21:26; Acts 21:27; Acts 21:28; Acts 21:29; Acts 21:30; Acts 22:17; Acts 24:6; Acts 24:12; Acts 24:18; Acts 25:8; Acts 26:21;

**Henry Morris** on **Artemis** - Diana (same as Artemis) was not only the goddess of hunting, but was considered--at least in Asia and in many other places around the Graeco/Roman world--to be the [mother goddess](#) of all nature, much like [Gaia](#), the goddess currently being widely promoted as Mother Earth in the New-Age movement.

Indeed many [neopagans](#) worship [Gaia](#) today, so the worship of "Artemis" (under a different name) is as they say "alive and well" in our modern paganized culture!

**Goddess** (2299)(**thea**) is the feminine form of the masculine [theos](#). It is widely used in classical Greek but not in the Septuagint. In the New Testament it appears only in Acts 19:27,37 in reference to the goddess Diana/Artemis of Ephesus. **BDAG** - "a (**ED: SUPPOSED**) transcendent being conceived of as female and ordinarily understood as tutelary or source of special benefits to her devotees and therefore worthy of highest admiration and respect."

**Regarded** (3049)([logizomai](#) from [lógos](#) = reason, word, account) means to reckon, compute, calculate, to take into account, and describes a process of careful study or reasoning which results in the arriving at a conclusion. **Logizomai** was a term frequently used in the business community of Paul's day and meant to impute (put to one's account) or credit to one's account. The accounts of these idol makers were soon to be

reckoned as ["in the red"](#)

**And that she whom all of Asia and the world worship** - The NET Note adds that "It is important to appreciate that money alone was not the issue, even for the pagan Ephesians. The issue was ultimately the dishonor of their goddess to whom they were devoted in worship. The battle was a "cosmic" one between deities."

**Robertson on all...the world** - An exaggeration, to be sure, but Pausanias says that no deity was more widely worshipped. Temples of Artemis have been found in Spain and Gaul. *Multitudo errantium non efficit veritatem* (Bengel). Even today heathenism has more followers than Christianity. To think that all this splendour was being set at naught by one man and a despised Jew at that!

**Utley** - There are numerous passages in Greek literature of the first century that mention Artemis of the Ephesians. Apparently there were thirty-nine separate cities of the Mediterranean world which were involved in the fertility worship of this mother goddess.

**Will even be dethroned from her magnificence** - "Suffer the loss of her greatness (magnificence)" Louw-Nida has "and to have her greatness done away with."

**Dethroned** (2507) ([kathaireo](#) from **kata** = down + **haireo** = to take for oneself) means to take down, tear down or destroy. In classical Greek it refers to objects, buildings, persons (to kill), and nations. The Septuagint uses it in reference to the taking down of altars, walls, vessels, idols, pagan temples, and the dismantling of tents. It is fascinating that this same word for "taking down" the reputation and significance is used in the NT in 4/9 uses to describe taking the body of Christ down from the Cross! (Mark 15:36,46; Luke 23:53; Acts 13:29). In 2 Cor 10:5 it is used by Paul to describe "destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ." That is not a bad application to Artemis which is nothing but vain speculation and demonically inspired men's thoughts raised up against the knowledge of God. The Gospel Paul proclaimed had the power to dethrone the idolatry and debauchery associated with Artemis.

**Magnificence** (3168) ([megaleiotetos](#) from **megaleios** = magnificent, mighty, great from **megas** = great) refers to the quality or state of being foremost in esteem, grandeur, splendor, sublimity, majesty. It defines the quality or state of being foremost in esteem, grandeur, sublimity, majesty. Three uses in NT two of God - Lk. 9:43; Acts 19:27; 2 Pet. 1:16

**Vincent** - Diana Or *Artemis*. We must distinguish between the Greek Artemis, known to the Romans as Diana, and the Ephesian goddess. The former, according to the legend, was the daughter of Zeus (Jove), and the sister of Apollo. She was the patroness of the chase, the huntress among the immortals, represented with bow, quiver, and spear, clad in hunting-habit, and attended by dogs and stags. She was both a destroyer and a preserver, sending forth her arrows of death, especially against women, but also acting as a healer, and as the special protectress of women in childbirth. She was also the goddess of the moon. She was a maiden divinity, whose ministers were vowed to chastity. The Ephesian Artemis is totally distinct from the Greek, partaking of the Asiatic character, and of the attributes of the Lydian Cybele, the great mother of the gods. Her worship near Ephesus appears to have existed among the native Asiatic population before the foundation of the city, and to have been adopted by the Greek immigrants, who gradually transferred to her features peculiar to the Grecian goddess. She was the personification of the fructifying and nourishing powers of nature, and her image, as represented on current coins of the time, is that of a swathed figure, covered with breasts, and holding in one hand a trident, and in the other a club. This uncouth figure, clad in a robe covered with mystic devices, stood in the shrine of the great temple, hidden by a purple curtain, and was believed to have fallen down from heaven ([ver. 35](#)). In her worship the oriental influence was predominant. The priests were eunuchs, and with them was associated a body of virgin priestesses and a number of slaves, the lowest of whom were known as neocori, or temple-sweepers ([ver. 35](#)). "Many a time must Paul have heard from the Jewish quarter the piercing shrillness of their flutes, and the harsh jangling of their timbrels; many a time have caught glimpses of their detestable dances and Corybantic processions, as, with streaming hair, and wild cries, and shaken torches of pine, they strove to madden the multitudes into sympathy with that orgiastic worship which was but too closely connected with the vilest debaucheries" (Farrar, "Life and Work of Paul").

**Acts 19:28 And when they heard this and were filled with rage, they began crying out, saying, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"**

NET Acts 19:28 When they heard this they became enraged and began to shout, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

GNT Acts 19:28 κο σαντες ὃ κα γεν μενοι πλ ρεις θυμο κρᾶζον λ γοντες, Μεγ λη ρτεμις φεσ ων.



NLT Acts 19:28 At this their anger boiled, and they began shouting, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

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

ESV Acts 19:28 When they heard this they were enraged and were crying out, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

ASV Acts 19:28 And when they heard this they were filled with wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesus.

CSB Acts 19:28 When they had heard this, they were filled with rage and began to cry out, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

NIV Acts 19:28 When they heard this, they were furious and began shouting: "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

NKJ Acts 19:28 Now when they heard this, they were full of wrath and cried out, saying, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"

NRS Acts 19:28 When they heard this, they were enraged and shouted, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

YLT Acts 19:28 And they having heard, and having become full of wrath, were crying out, saying, 'Great is the Artemis of the Ephesians!'

- **they heard this and were filled with rage** - Ac 7:54 16:19-24 21:28-31 Ps 2:2 Rev 12:12
- **they began crying out** - Ac 19:34,35 1Sa 5:3-5 1Ki 18:26-29 Isa 41:5-7 Jer 50:38 Rev 13:4 Rev 17:13
- [Acts 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## DEMETRIUS' VITRIOL FINALLY INFLAMES THE CROWD

**And when they heard this and were filled with rage** - Remember that what fills a person will exert control over that person, in this case resulting in a violent mob reaction. How much better to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18+) and experience the fruit of His peace! "Like the Chaldeans of Jeremiah's day, they were "mad over fearsome idols" (Jer. 50:38). (MacArthur) As an aside anger is a not uncommon reaction by the lost world to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, so don't be surprised when you experience it (of course not likely to be of this magnitude).

The reaction of these pagans is similar to that of the Jews to Stephen's sermon "Now when they heard this, they were cut to the quick, and they began gnashing their teeth at him." (Acts 7:54+).

**THOUGHT** - Satan is able to use Jew or Gentile to accomplish his evil work in opposition to the Gospel. The message for all disciples of Jesus who are actively sharing the Gospel is to "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." (1 Pe 5:8+)

**Filled with** (abounding) (4134) (**pleres** from **pleos** = full, **pletho** = to fill) means filled up as opposed to empty (as of a hollow vessel - Mt 14:20, 15:37, Mk 6:43). Of a surface, covering every part (leprosy in Lk 5:12). Figuratively, of one full of, filled with, abounding in, thoroughly endowed with (Lk 4:1 full of the Holy Spirit, Acts 9:36 abounding in deeds, Stephen full of grace and power Acts 6:8) **Pleres** is repeatedly associated with the Holy Spirit - Lk 4:1, Acts 6:3, 5, 7:55, 11:24. Clearly the state of being filled with the Spirit was of great import in the life of Jesus and the lives of the disciples in the Book of Acts. When **pleres** is used in this figurative sense, it conveys something more than simply "filling up to the brim" so to speak. It also conveys the truth that what fills a person, controls the person.

**Luke's** uses of **Pleres** Matt. 14:20; Matt. 15:37; Mk. 4:28; Mk. 8:19; Lk. 4:1; Lk. 5:12; Jn. 1:14; Acts 6:3; Acts 6:5; Acts 6:8; Acts 7:55; Acts 9:36; Acts 11:24; Acts 13:10; Acts 19:28; 2 Jn. 1:8

Pleres is used in Acts 7:55 of Stephen's response to the infuriated Jewish crowd - "But being **full** of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God;

**Rage** (wrath, indignation) (2372) (**thumos** from **thúo** = move impetuously, particularly as the air or wind, a violent motion or passion of the mind; move violently, rush along) describes **passion** (as if breathing hard) and so speaks of an agitated or "heated" anger that rushes along (impulse toward a thing). **Thumos** describes a



tumultuous welling up of the whole spirit; a mighty emotion which seizes and moves the whole inner man -- can't you just picture the crowd being roused up by the words of Demetrius! **Thumos** (especially when accompanied by breathing violently or hard) pictures a "panting rage" probably also a good depiction of these Ephesian businessmen!. We've all seen individuals in whom there was a sudden outburst of this type of passionate anger. You can even see their nasal passages widening to take in more air in the heat of their passion.

**Jack Arnold** - You can see them now waving their placards and crying, "One, two, three, four; we want Artemis and nothing more!" This fanatical crowd had a choice: silver or salvation; gold or God; man's business or God's business; Artemis or Christ. They let their emotions rule their heads and they bowed to a stone idol rather than the Lord Jesus Christ. ([Sermon](#))

**They began crying out, saying, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"** - **Crying out** is in the [imperfect tense](#) picturing this crowd as shouting over and over, again and again. One can imagine this raucous scene! In a touch of irony Vincent adds that this same "reiteration was a characteristic of the oriental [orgiastic rites](#)."

**McGee** suggests that "They went around the city with their placards shouting, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians."" Recall that the goddess was often called simply "The Great!"

It's amazing to me to watch WWII films where thousands upon thousands of Germans would chant together and raise their hands together and chant 'Heil Hitler.'

**Crying out** ([2896](#)) ([krazo](#)) refers to a loud cry or vociferation, expressing deep emotion. **Krazo** is one of those onomatopoeic words, the very pronunciation of which imitates the hoarse cry of the raven. ([listen to the raven's cry out](#)).

**Guzik** - It has often happened in the history of Christianity that when God moves among His people and they become very serious about their Christianity, that it affects the livelihood of those who trade in vice or immorality. For example, in the early years of the Salvation Army, they were so effective that pimps and bar owner organized a "Skeleton Army" to oppose them with threats and violence—and even a few Salvation Army workers were murdered.

**Acts 19:29 The city was filled with the confusion, and they rushed with one accord into the theater, dragging along Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's traveling companions from Macedonia.**

NET Acts 19:29 The city was filled with the uproar, and the crowd rushed to the theater together, dragging with them Gaius and Aristarchus, the Macedonians who were Paul's traveling companions.

GNT Acts 19:29 κα πλ σθη π λ ι ς τ ς συγχ σεως ρμησ ν τε μοθυμαδ ν ε ς τ θ ατρον συναρπ σαντες Γ ιον κα ρ σταρχον Μακεδ νας, συνεκδ μους Πα λου.

NLT Acts 19:29 Soon the whole city was filled with confusion. Everyone rushed to the amphitheater, dragging along Gaius and Aristarchus, who were Paul's traveling companions from Macedonia.

KJV 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.

ESV Acts 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.

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

CSB Acts 19:29 So the city was filled with confusion, and they rushed all together into the amphitheater, dragging along Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians who were Paul's traveling companions.

NIV Acts 19:29 Soon the whole city was in an uproar. The people seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's traveling companions from Macedonia, and rushed as one man into the theater.

NKJ Acts 19:29 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.

NRS Acts 19:29 The city was filled with the confusion; and people rushed together to the theater, dragging with them Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians who were Paul's travel companions.

YLT Acts 19:29 and the whole city was filled with confusion, they rushed also with one accord into the theatre, having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians, Paul's fellow-travellers.

- **The city was filled with the confusion:** Ac 19:32 17:8 21:30,38
- **dragging along Gaius :** Ro 16:23 1Co 1:14
- **Aristarchus:** Ac 20:4 27:2 Col 4:10 Phm 1:24
- **the theater:** 1Co 4:9
- [Acts 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Remains of the Amphitheater at Ephesus

## THE UPROAR BECOMES A CONFUSING PUBLIC SPECTACLE

A good word picture of this scene is our English word pandemonium is defined as a wild uproar because of anger or excitement in a crowd of people. Now catch this - what is even more fascinating is to study the derivation of the word **pandemonium** - [PAN-](#) + Late Latin **daemonium** "evil spirit," borrowed from Greek [daimonion](#) "evil spirit," earlier "divine power, inferior divine being," derivative of *daímōn* "divinity, divine power, individual destiny" (with *-ium* probably to be read as Latin *-ium* or Greek *-ion*, suffixes of place). Surely that is apropos to this satanically inspired spectacle! He would do anything to stamp out the Gospel progress and the main proclaimer Paul! Spiritual warfare is real and is really dangerous, so be sure to put on the full armor of God every day! (Eph 6:10-17<sup>±</sup>).

**The city was filled with the confusion** - This logically follows for in Acts 19:28 the people was filled with rage and rage virtually always gives way to confusion. Luke now describes how the "venom" from Demetrius had spread throughout the city, causing in effect a mob scene.

**Constable** points out that "A major boulevard, the [Arcadian Way](#), ran from the harbor to the theater, and it was probably this artery that the ringleaders used to collect citizens on their march to the theater." (See [excellent picture of Arcadian way leading to Amphitheater](#))

**Confusion** (4799)([sugchusis/synchysis](#) from **sun** = together + **cheo** = to pour) literally describes that which is poured together. It is a noun that speaks of a tumult as one sees with a disorderly mob reaction. This word emphasizes the riotous, uncertain, confusion of the crowd. Luke uses the related verb in Acts 19:32 ("the assembly **was in confusion**"). It was a city in an uproar with confusion, disorder, and anger that accompanied the mob scene.

**And they rushed with one accord into the theater** - The ruins of this large amphitheater ([see note](#)) still remain today and it is estimated it could hold from 25-50,000 people. With a touch of irony Luke uses *homothumadon* (see below), the great word he uses to describe the unity and fellowship of believers (Acts 1:14; 2:1, 46; 4:24; 5:12; 8:6; 15:25) but now describes the unity of these evil men. They have one mind and one goal in mind and that is to preserve the reputation of Artemis and destroy the Christians. Does this not sound just like Satan who comes to "steal, kill and destroy" (Jn 10:10)?

**Rushed** (3729)([hormao](#) from **horme** = violent impulse from **ornumi** = to excite, arouse) means to set out, to rush headlong, violently, impetuously. It describes a "swift and violent forward motion uncontrolled by reason." (Friberg) It is so fitting that in Acts 7:57 **hormao** described a herd of Sanhedrin controlled by their rage rushing at Stephen, this same verb was used to describe a herd of swine controlled by evil spirits rushing to their death! There is not much difference between these two pictures and these raging Ephesians who rushed into the theater! In a word, all three groups of rushers were controlled by evil spirits and had destruction on their mind! One can smell the scent of Satan in all three situations! **Robertson** adds **hormaō** is an "old verb for impetuous dashing, a case of mob psychology (mob mind), with one accord (*homothumadon* as in Acts 1:14, etc.)."

**With one accord** (3661)([homothumadon](#) from a combination of **homos** = same + **thumos** = temperament or mind - cf **thumos** used in Acts 19:28 for **rage!**) means with one mind, unity of mind, with one purpose, with unanimous consent, of one accord. In a word it means together. One lexicon says **homothumadon** means "to be of one soul." **Homothumadon** is found 11x (only once outside Acts - Ro 15:6) and is used both in a positive sense (Acts 1:14; Acts 2:46; Acts 4:24; Acts 5:12; Acts 8:6; Acts 15:25 = a "key word" in Acts and helping to explain the power of the early church as a unified organism!) and a negative sense (Acts 7:57 Acts 12:20 Acts 18:12 Acts 19:29).

**Theater** (2302)(**theatron** from **theaomai** = to behold) described the theater or **amphitheater**, as a place for public spectacles and assemblies, originally for dramatic presentations, then for spectators, including **gladiatorial** shows. In 1 Cor 4:9 **theatron** is used as metonymy, of what is enacted in the theater and thus a spectacle or show (an unusual object or event which is observed).

**Zodhiates** - a place where drama and other public spectacles were exhibited and where the people convened to hear debates or hold public consultations." (Ibid)

**BDAG** - (1) a place for public assemblies (Acts 19:29, 31) (2) what one sees at a theater (1 Cor 4:9)

**Gilbrant** - In classical Greek the noun **theatron** is used to describe "a place for seeing," especially for seeing drama. It is derived from the verb **theaomai** (2277), "to gaze at, behold, see clearly." Though the word is found as early as Herodotus (Fifth Century B.C.), it never appears in the Septuagint. The primary meaning is "a place for the performance of dramatic representations," transliterated into English as "theater." The secondary meaning is "what is seen at the theater," hence, "a play, spectacle" (cf. Moulton-Milligan). (Ibid)

**Liddell-Scott** - a place for seeing, esp. a theatre, Hdt., Thuc., etc. 2. collective for the people in the theatre, the spectators, 'the house,' Hdt., Ar. 3. a show, spectacle,

**Theatron** - 3x - spectacle(1), theater(2). Acts 19:29; Acts 19:31; 1 Co. 4:9

**Alexander Maclaren** wrote, "What they meant to do with the two, they had probably not asked themselves. A mob has no plans, and its most savage acts are unpremeditated. Passion let loose is almost sure to end in bloodshed, and the lives of Gaius and Aristarchus hung by a thread."

**Dragging along Gaius and Aristarchus** - They snatched them from what they were doing they forced them to go with them. In Acts 20:4+ we read that Paul "was accompanied by Sopater of Berea, the son of Pyrrhus, and by **Aristarchus** and Secundus of the Thessalonians (cf Acts 27:2, Col 4:10-11, Php 2:4), and **Gaius** of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia."

**Dragging** (4884)(**sunarpazo** from **sun** = with ~ intensifies meaning + **harpazo** = to seize, rapture) means to seize (suddenly and violently), to grasp with great violence. Stronger than **harpaz** by itself! Of a mob seizing Stephen to drag him away (Acts 6:12); of demon activity seize (Lk 8:29); passive, of a ship in a storm be caught, be forced off course by the wind and swept on (Acts 27:15) **Sunarpazo** - 4x - Lk. 8:29; Acts 6:12; Acts 19:29; Acts 27:15

**MacArthur - Aristarchus** was a beloved companion of Paul, who would accompany him on his ill-fated voyage to Rome (Acts 27:2) and share his imprisonment in that city (Col. 4:10). He was a Jewish believer, since Paul describes him, along with "Barnabas' cousin Mark" and "Jesus who is called Justus," as "fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are from the circumcision" (Col. 4:10-11). (MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Acts)

**Paul's traveling companions from Macedonia** - The Greek word is **sunekdemos** (**sun** = together + **ekdemos** = one who is absent, i.e., a traveler) is used only here and in 2 Cor 8:19 and described Paul's fellow travelers in foreign countries. **Gaius** and **Aristarchus** were men who were so to speak "away from home on a journey with" Paul. (Louw-Nida)

**Traveling companions** (4898)(**sunekdemos** from **sun** - with + **ek** = from + **demos** = people, the public) one who is away from home on a journey with someone else—"travelling companion. The two occurrences of the word in the New Testament are Acts 19:29 and 2 Corinthians 8:19. In the first instance the Ephesian citizens seized Gaius and Aristarchus who were Paul's "companions in travel" (**sunekdēmous**) and rushed with them into the town theater. In 2 Corinthians 8:19 Paul wrote of an unnamed brother chosen to travel with (**sunekdēmos**, "fellow traveler") Paul's party.

**Brian Harbour** wrote, "When God's people get serious, vested interests are often threatened. Those who do not want to rock the boat are shaken. Those who are hanging on to the past are disturbed. Serious commitment to Christ does not remove problems. Sometimes, as it did for the Christians at Ephesus, it increases the problems."

**David Jeremiah** wrote, "I've almost concluded that if you are not getting opposition in your work for God, then you may be doing something wrong! Whenever the world stops criticizing or opposing the church, we know we are no longer a threat and have stopped doing God's work."

**Acts 19:30 And when Paul wanted to go into the assembly, the disciples would not let him.**

NET Acts 19:30 But when Paul wanted to enter the public assembly, the disciples would not let him.

GNT Acts 19:30 Παλου δ βουλομ νου εσελθε ν ες τ ν δ μον ο κ ε ων α τ ν ο μαθητα ·

NLT Acts 19:30 Paul wanted to go in, too, but the believers wouldn't let him.

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

ESV Acts 19:30 But when Paul wished to go in among the crowd, the disciples would not let him.

ASV Acts 19:30 And when Paul was minded to enter in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not.

CSB Acts 19:30 Though Paul wanted to go in before the people, the disciples did not let him.

NIV Acts 19:30 Paul wanted to appear before the crowd, but the disciples would not let him.

NKJ Acts 19:30 And when Paul wanted to go in to the people, the disciples would not allow him.

NRS Acts 19:30 Paul wished to go into the crowd, but the disciples would not let him;

YLT Acts 19:30 And on Paul's purposing to enter in unto the populace, the disciples were not suffering him,

- **Paul:** Ac 14:14-18 17:22-31 21:39
- **the disciples:** 2Sa 18:2,3 21:17
- [Acts 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## ASSEMBLY IN THE AMPHITHEATER

Note God's clear providential protection as Paul was not seized as were his traveling companions. God had him safe and secure.

**And when Paul wanted to go into the assembly** - Paul was bold, and wanted to confront the howling mob, but in this case probably not wise. And what do you think he really wanted to do before an amphitheater full of pagans? Preach the Word of course!

**Matthew Henry** reminds us, "We may be called to lay down our lives, but not to throw away our lives."

As **Knowing** says "St. Paul was not the man to leave his comrades in the lurch." He would have made a good marine the motto of which is "Leave no man behind!" Paul was a strong-willed man, but on this occasion, he allowed other believers to influence some decisions (Acts 19:31).

**McGee** is probably correct - Paul would have been mobbed, of course. He would absolutely have been killed. He already had one experience like that over in the Galatian country when he was stoned in Lystra.

**Assembly** (1218) (**demos**) means people, populace, crowd, "the mass of the people assembled in a public place." BDAG says "in a Hellenistic city (demos described) a convocation of citizens called together for the purpose of transacting official business."

**MacArthur** - Although the apostle did not "consider [his] life of any account as dear to [himself]" (Acts 20:24), the other believers would not allow him to risk his life needlessly (cf. Acts 9:25, 30; 17:10, 14). (Ibid)

**The disciples** (**mathetes**) **would not let him** - Would not let is in imperfect picturing Paul as heading toward the theater and being held back again and again. Fortunately they restrained Paul. They did not want him confronting an angry, confused mob.

**Let** (permit, let) (1439) (**eao**) means to allow someone to do something, to let or to permit (Mt 24:43; Lk 4:41 = "He would not allow them to speak", Acts 14:16; Acts 23:32; Acts 27:32, 28:2 1 Cor 10:13), Of leaving the anchors in the sea (Acts 27:40).

**Acts 19:31 Also some of the Asiarchs who were friends of his sent to him and repeatedly urged him not to venture into the theater.**

NET Acts 19:31 Even some of the provincial authorities who were his friends sent a message to him, urging him not to venture into the theater.

GNT Acts 19:31 τιν ες δ κα τ ν σιαρχ ν, ντες α τ φ λοι, π μψαντες πρ ες α τ ν παρεκ λουν μ δο ναι αυ τ ν ες τ θ ατρον.

NLT Acts 19:31 Some of the officials of the province, friends of Paul, also sent a message to him, begging him not to risk his life by entering the amphitheater.

KJV 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.

ESV Acts 19:31 And even some of the Asiarchs, who were friends of his, sent to him and were urging him not to venture into the theater.

ASV Acts 19:31 And certain also of the Asiarchs, being his friends, sent unto him and besought him not to adventure himself into the theatre.

CSB Acts 19:31 Even some of the provincial officials of Asia, who were his friends, sent word to him, pleading with him not to take a chance by going into the amphitheater.

NIV Acts 19:31 Even some of the officials of the province, friends of Paul, sent him a message begging him not to venture into the theater.

NKJ Acts 19:31 Then some of the officials of Asia, who were his friends, sent to him pleading that he would not venture into the theater.

NRS Acts 19:31 even some officials of the province of Asia, who were friendly to him, sent him a message urging him not to venture into the theater.

YLT Acts 19:31 and certain also of the chief men of Asia, being his friends, having sent unto him, were entreating him not to venture himself into the theatre.

- **Also some of the Asiarchs** Ac 19:10 16:6 Pr 16:7
- **repeatedly urged him not to venture into the theater.** - Ac 21:12
- [Acts 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Also some of the Asiarchs who were friends of his sent to him - NET Note** says "The desire of these sympathetic authorities was surely to protect Paul's life. The detail indicates how dangerous things had become." Were they believers? We cannot say for certain either way.

**Arnold** - We should note that Paul made **friends** with unbelievers even though they never came to Christ. The educated classes highly respected Paul even though they violently disagreed with him. ([Sermon](#))

**Robertson** - Evidently the Asiarchs had a high opinion of Paul and were unwilling for him to expose his life to a wild mob during the festival of Artemis. They were at least tolerant toward Paul and his preaching. "It was an Asiarch who at Smyrna resisted the cry of the populace to throw Polycarp to the lions" (Furneaux).

**Asiarchs** (775)([asiarches](#) from **asia** + **archo** = to rule) is literally a "chief of Asia." Thayer has a long note - an Asiarch, President of Asia: Acts 19:31. Each of the cities of proconsular Asia, at the autumnal equinox, assembled its most honorable and opulent citizens, in order to select one to preside over the games to be exhibited that year, at his expense, in honor of the gods and the Roman emperor. Thereupon each city reported the name of the person selected to a general assembly held in some leading city, as Ephesus, Smyrna, Sardis. This general council, called to, koinon, selected ten out of the number of candidates, and sent them to the proconsul; and the proconsul, apparently, chose one of these ten to preside over the rest. This explains how it is that in Acts, the passage cited several Asiarchs are spoken of, while Eusebius, mentions only one; (perhaps also the title outlasted the service)."

**Longenecker** notes that **Asiarchs** :were members of the noblest and wealthiest families of the province of Asia and were bound together in a league for promoting the cult of the emperor and Rome... Every year an Asiarch was elected for the entire province, and additional Asiarchs were elected for each city that had a temple honoring the emperor. The title was probably borne for life by officers in the league; so in Paul's day there could have been a number of Asiarchs at Ephesus." (EBC)

**Robertson** adds this note on **Asiarchs** - These "Asiarchs" were ten officers elected by cities in the province who celebrated at their own cost public games and festivals (Page). Each province had such a group of men chosen, as we now know from inscriptions, to supervise the funds connected with the worship of the emperor, to preside at games and festivals even when the temple services were to gods like Artemis. Only rich men could act, but the position was eagerly sought.

**Vincent** on **Asiarchs** - These were persons chosen from the province of Asia, on account of their influence and wealth, to preside at the public games and to defray their expenses.

**Constable** - Some of these men were **friends** of Paul. This shows again that the attitude of many leaders was friendly to Christianity at this time. Their attitude doubtless reflected what was appropriate in the empire. The Asiarchs too wanted to prevent Paul from injury. "A sect whose leader had Asiarchs for friends cannot be dangerous to the state." Notice that Paul had made friends with leading men of the city; he did not keep a low profile as he evangelized.

#### Related Resources:

- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Asiarchs](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Asiarchs](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Asiarch](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Asiarch](#) - longest article
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Asiarch](#)

**Friends** (5384)(**philos**) means loved (loved one), dear, befriended, friendly, kind. **Philos** in this context means kindly disposed. **Philos** describes one having special interest in someone else. One who is on intimate terms or in close association with someone else

As Christians there is a time to stand and fight, but there is also a time to stay put! There's a time to speak up, stand up, but there is also a time to sit still!

**And repeatedly urged** ([parakaleo](#)) **him** - **Repeatedly urged** is in the [imperfect tense](#) showing that the messengers sent had to repeated insist as Paul repeatedly protested. **Robertson** notes that "It is not the first time that friends had rescued Paul from peril (Acts 9:25, 30; Acts 17:10, 14)."

**Not to venture into the theater** - Literally the Greek (**didomi** = give + **heautou** = himself) reads "not to give himself into the theater." It is interesting that Paul uses the same phrase (**didomi** = give + **heautou** = himself) to describe Jesus Who **gave Himself** for our sins (Galatians 1:4; 1 Tim. 2:6; Titus 2:14).

**Jack Andrews** - According to a report on Christianpost.com a pastor and twenty worshipers were killed when gunmen suspected to be Islamic militants opened fire in two separate incidents targeting worship services in northern Nigeria Sunday, April 29, 2012. Christians are still persecuted! There are plenty who will oppose the message of salvation and the messenger! (Ibid)

**Acts 19:32 So then, some were shouting one thing and some another, for the assembly was in confusion and the majority did not know for what reason they had come together.**

NET Acts 19:32 So then some were shouting one thing, some another, for the assembly was in confusion, and most of them did not know why they had met together.

GNT Acts 19:32 λλοι μ ν ο ν λλο τι κρᾶζον· ν γ ρ κκλησ α συγκεχυμ νη κα ο πλε ους ο κ δεισαν τ νος νεκα συνεληλ θεισαν.

NLT Acts 19:32 Inside, the people were all shouting, some one thing and some another. Everything was in confusion. In fact, most of them didn't even know why they were there.

KJV 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.

ESV Acts 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.

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

CSB Acts 19:32 Meanwhile, some were shouting one thing and some another, because the assembly was in confusion, and most of them did not know why they had come together.

NIV Acts 19:32 The assembly was in confusion: Some were shouting one thing, some another. Most of the people did not even know why they were there.



NKJ Acts 19:32 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.

NRS Acts 19:32 Meanwhile, some were shouting one thing, some another; for the assembly was in confusion, and most of them did not know why they had come together.

YLT Acts 19:32 Some indeed, therefore, were calling out one thing, and some another, for the assembly was confused, and the greater part did not know for what they were come together;

- **Some were shouting one thing and some another** - Ac 19:29 21:34
- **and the majority did not know for what reason they had come together** - Ac 19:40 Mt 11:7-9 Lu 7:24-26
- [Acts 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Phillips** has a vivid comment - The universal chant soon degenerated into indiscriminate shouting. Some would be shouting for Artemis. Some would be shouting anti-Semitic slogans. Some would have picked up the name of Paul and would be cursing him vehemently. Some would be shouting down Christianity, which was by now a well-known and powerful force in the city. Soon the arena was filled with a yelling, disorderly mob, each person picking up a line or two of the prevailing, deafening din. (Exploring Acts: An Expository Commentary)

**Jack Andrews** - This mob didn't have a clue as to why they were there and what they were going to do while they were there. They didn't know what to shout! They were not on the same page! Max Lemer in his book "The Unfinished Country" wrote, "Every mob, in its ignorance and blindness and bewilderment, is a League of Frightened Men that seeks reassurance in collective action." That is a pretty good definition of a mob and that's exactly what was happening in Ephesus! These folks were divided in their proclamation. They cried out in confusion. (Jack Andrews Expository Studies – Understanding Acts - Volume 5)

**So then, some were shouting one thing and some another - Were shouting** is in the [imperfect tense](#) picturing one after another crying out - quite a scene! This is a typical reaction of a mob that is out of control.

**Shouting** (2896) (**krazo**) refers to a loud cry or vociferation, expressing deep emotion. **Krazo** is one of those onomatopoeic words, the very pronunciation of which imitates the hoarse cry (or "croak") of the raven. ([listen to the raven's cry out](#)).

**For the assembly was in confusion** - Luke explains (**for** - gar) the reason for the shouting. **Was in confusion** is in the [perfect tense](#) describing this as its "fixed" state or condition. These were the citizens of the city that had been swept into the frenzy as the craftsmen plotted Paul's downfall.

**Robertson** notes that "It was not an **"assembly"** (ekklesia, ek, kaleō, to call out), but a wholly irregular, disorganized mob in a state ([perfect tense](#)) of confusion. There was "a lawful assembly" (Acts 19:39), but this mob was not one. Luke shows his contempt for this mob (Furneaux).

**Assembly** (1577) (**ekklesia** from **ek** = out + **klesis** = a calling, verb = **kaleo** = to call) literally means **called out** (but see note by Louw-Nida below) and as commonly used in the Greco-Roman vernacular referred to citizens who were *called out* from their homes to be publicly assembled or gathered to discuss or carry out affairs of state.

**Was in confusion** (bewildered, confounding, stir) (4797) (**sugcheo/sugchunno** from **sun** = with, together + **cheo** = to pour) literally means to pour together "precisely like the Latin *confundo*, to confound" (Robertson), not a meaning found in the NT. Figuratively, it means to cause dismay, confound, be thrown into confusion, be amazed, be stirred up (Acts 2:6+). In the acts sense it means to stir up trouble. It is interesting that this verb is used to describe the confusion of languages at the Tower of Babel so that men could not understand one another (Ge 11:7). It is interesting that in Acts 2 we see in a sense a "reversal" of what God did at Babel, Moses recording "its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of the whole earth." (Ge 11:9) The mob in Ephesus is more like Babel! **Sugcheo** - 5x - Acts 2:6; Acts 9:22; Acts 19:32; Acts 21:27; Acts 21:31

**Craig Keener** - Greek comedy frequently parodied people's stupidity; Luke's readers would laugh at the crowd not knowing the purpose of their rioting."

**And the majority did not know for what reason**(on whose account) **they had come together** - One of the characteristics of many mobs is they are so swept up in the hysteria of the crowd that they don't have a clue what initiated the mob reaction.

**Robertson** adds that "It was an **assembly** only in one sense. For some reason **Demetrius** who was responsible for the mob

preferred now to keep in the background, though he was known to be the ring-leader of the gathering (Acts 19:38). It was just a mob that shouted because others did.

**Acts 19:33 Some of the crowd concluded it was Alexander, since the Jews had put him forward; and having motioned with his hand, Alexander was intending to make a defense to the assembly.**

NET Acts 19:33 Some of the crowd concluded it was about Alexander because the Jews had pushed him to the front. Alexander, gesturing with his hand, was wanting to make a defense before the public assembly.

GNT Acts 19:33 κ ὁ το χλου συνεβ βασαν λ ξανδρον, προβαλ ντων α τ ν τ ν ουδα ων· ὁ λ ξανδρος κατασε σας τ ν χε ρα θελεν πολογε σθαι τ ὁ μ .

NLT Acts 19:33 The Jews in the crowd pushed Alexander forward and told him to explain the situation. He motioned for silence and tried to speak.

KJV 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.

ESV Acts 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.

ASV Acts 19:33 And they brought Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made a defense unto the people.

CSB Acts 19:33 Then some of the crowd gave Alexander advice when the Jews pushed him to the front. So motioning with his hand, Alexander wanted to make his defense to the people.

NIV Acts 19:33 The Jews pushed Alexander to the front, and some of the crowd shouted instructions to him. He motioned for silence in order to make a defense before the people.

NKJ Acts 19:33 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.

NRS Acts 19:33 Some of the crowd gave instructions to Alexander, whom the Jews had pushed forward. And Alexander motioned for silence and tried to make a defense before the people.

YLT Acts 19:33 and out of the multitude they put forward Alexander -- the Jews thrusting him forward -- and Alexander having beckoned with the hand, wished to make defence to the populace,

- **concluded it was Alexander:** 1Ti 1:20 2Ti 4:14
- **having motioned with his hand:** Ac 12:17 13:16 21:40 24:10 Lu 1:22
- **Alexander was intending to make a defense to the assembly-** Ac 22:1 26:1,2 Php 1:7
- [Acts 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Some of the crowd concluded it was Alexander, since the Jews had put him forward** - They pushed Alexander to the front! We do not know if he was a believer or not. The Jews may have put him forward simply to avoid a generalized anti-semitic attack which would not have distinguished between believing and non-believing Jews.

**John Phillips** has an interesting note on **Alexander** - When Paul was in prison in Rome, awaiting his execution by Nero, he mentioned in his last letter a man named Alexander the coppersmith who "did me much evil" and whom he handed over to the Lord for judgment (2 Tim. 4:14). This Alexander was evidently a dangerous and eloquent foe of Christianity, and Paul warned Timothy to beware of him. In his first letter to Timothy, Paul also mentions an Alexander who had "made shipwreck" of the faith, whom he had found it necessary to hand over to Satan for judgment (1 Tim. 1:19-20). One wonders, of course, if those are not one and the same individual, the man who here was put forward by the Jews to speak for them to the mob. (Exploring Acts: An Expository Commentary)

**Robertson** - Alexandria had already disgraceful scenes of Jew-baiting and there was real peril now in Ephesus with this wild mob. So Alexander was pushed forward as the champion to defend the Jews to the excited mob. He may be the same Alexander the coppersmith who did Paul much evil (2 Tim. 4:14), against whom Paul will warn Timothy then in Ephesus. "The Jews were likely to deal in the copper and silver required for the shrines, so he may have had some trade connexion with the craftsmen which would give him influence" (Furneaux).

**Constable** - The crowd's reaction to **Alexander** showed distinct hostility toward him. Apparently Alexander was a leading unbelieving Jew who wanted the crowd to understand that even though Paul was a Jew the local Jewish community did not approve of him (cf. Acts 18:12-17). However, like Gallio in Corinth, this crowd did not distinguish between Christianity and Judaism. Both faiths stood against idolatry.

**Concluded** (4822)(**sumbibazo** from **sun** = together + **bibazo** = to make to go up) means to bring together, to make or cause to go or come together, to join together, and all of these meanings occur in both a literal and figurative sense. Figuratively in an intellectual sense, **sumbibazo** meant to mentally put together -- to draw a conclusion in the face of evidence, "to conclude in one's mind by putting facts together," to give thought to something in order to reach a suitable conclusion, opinion, or decision (Acts 16:10+)

**Had put him forward** (4261)(**proballo** from **pro** = before, in front of + **ballo** = throw) literally means throw before and so to cause Alexander to come forward. Apparently some pushed him forward to speak in the theater.

**And having motioned with his hand, Alexander was intending to make a defense to the assembly**- Alexander was rapidly waving his hand up and down to get a hearing. Luke frequently mentions motioning with the hand (Acts 12:17; Acts 13:16; Acts 21:40), presumably to get the attention and in this case to cause the mob to stop shouting so they could hear.

**Intending** (desiring, wishing) (2309)(**thelo**) primarily refers to exercising one's will with underlying sense of to desire, to want or to wish. **Alexander** apparently was willing to speak even though he had been pushed forward.

**Make...defense** (626)(**apologeomai** from **apo** = from + **logos** = speech) literally means, "to talk one's self off from" and thus to speak in one's own defense, defend oneself. BDAG - "to speak in one's own defense against charges presumed to be false," **Apologia** was a technical word used in the Greek law courts and was used of an attorney who talked his client off from a charge preferred against him. In short it refers to a speech given in defense. **Robertson** adds the "Imperfect active, (signifies he) wanted to make a defence, tried to, started to, but apparently never got out a word."

**NET Note** - The nature of Alexander's defense is not clear. It appears he was going to explain, as a Jew, that the problem was not caused by Jews, but by those of "the Way." However, he never got a chance to speak.

**Acts 19:34 But when they recognized that he was a Jew, a single outcry arose from them all as they shouted for about two hours, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"**

NET Acts 19:34 But when they recognized that he was a Jew, they all shouted in unison, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" for about two hours.

GNT Acts 19:34 πῖν ντες δ τι ουδα ς σπιν, φων γ νετο μα κ π ντων ς π ρας δ ο κρτζ ντων, Μεγ λη ρτεμις φεσ ων.

NLT Acts 19:34 But when the crowd realized he was a Jew, they started shouting again and kept it up for two hours: "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians! Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

KJV 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.

ESV Acts 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!"

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

CSB Acts 19:34 But when they recognized that he was a Jew, a united cry went up from all of them for about two hours: "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

NIV Acts 19:34 But when they realized he was a Jew, they all shouted in unison for about two hours: "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

NKJ Acts 19:34 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!"

NRS Acts 19:34 But when they recognized that he was a Jew, for about two hours all of them shouted in unison, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

YLT Acts 19:34 and having known that he is a Jew, one voice came out of all, for about two hours, crying, 'Great is the Artemis of the Ephesians!'

- **But when they recognized that he was a Jew**- Ac 19:26 16:20 Ro 2:22
- **all as they shouted for about two hours** 1Ki 18:26 Mt 6:7
- **Great is Artemis of the Ephesians**- Ac 19:28 Rev 13:4
- [Acts 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE ATTEMPT BY JEWS BACKFIRED

**But when** - Term of contrast marking abrupt change in direction of the mob.

**Andrews** - The mob went from a congregation of confusion to a multitude with a mission. The mob became unified in their proclamation. (Ibid)

**They recognized that he was a Jew, a single outcry arose from them all**- Recall at this point in time a pagan crowd would see little distinction between Jews and Christians, for both were monotheistic and rejected idolatry.

**John Phillips** on **Alexander** - Evidently the Jews feared that the sentiments of the mob would soon degenerate into the old Gentile sport of Jew-baiting. Anti-Semitism was never far from the surface in the Gentile world, as the Jews knew only too well. Evidently this Alexander was a prominent member of the Jewish community and well known in the city. He seemed to think that by a wave of his hand he could gain the attention of the mob. He was mistaken. Word soon flashed around the arena that a *Jew* was trying to make himself heard. The response was instant and sustained. No detested Jew was going to speak to them. Again the original chant swelled until it could be heard all over the city: "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!".(Exploring Acts: An Expository Commentary)

**Robertson** - Now at last the crowd became unanimous (one voice) at the sight of a hated Jew about to defend their attacks on the worship of Artemis.

**Toussaint** - The reduction in Artemis' idol business was not their fault! However, anti-Semitism took over, the mob refused to listen to **a Jew**, and **they** chanted in frenzy **for about two hours** (BKC).

**Williams** writes that "The noise must have been deafening. The acoustics of the theater are excellent even today and at that time were even better because of bronze and clay sounding vessels placed throughout the auditorium."

**As they shouted for about two hours, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians"**- They would not even let him speak as their voices drowned him out. One can imagine this raucous, unruly scene which went on for 2 hours! "This slogan aroused their pride, fed their egos, ministered to their emotions and covered up their guilt." (Arnold)

**Guzik** writes - Think of how this echoes to our own time, and see the strangeness of our world. People say today, in words, actions, time or dollars spent: "Great is my sports team!" "Great is my political party!" "Great is the consumer economy!" "Great is internet porn!" "Great is material wealth!" "Great is getting drunk or getting high!" And yet if one says, "**Great is the Lord Jesus Christ**"—they are regarded by many as strange. For all the supposed greatness of Diana of the Ephesians, no one worships her today (at least directly). Yet there are millions and millions today who live for and worship Jesus Christ, and who would willingly die for Him. Idols and false gods all have expiration dates—Jesus of Nazareth lives forever.

**NET Note** - The extent of the tumult shows the racial and social tensions of a cosmopolitan city like Ephesus, indicating what the Christians in such locations had to face.

**Jack Arnold** - While we must deplore their idolatry, we cannot help but be impressed with their dedication and devotion to Artemis. Their enthusiasm strikes us. Their zeal cannot be denied. While they were motivated by pride, selfishness and hatred, their zeal for a false god was truly amazing. What about our zeal for the true God, Christians? Do we have as much commitment to the true God as they had to a false god? Of course, we are not asked to meet in mass meetings and shout slogans, but are we willing to move among men and cry out, "Great is Jehovah! Praise to His Son, Jesus Christ!" Are we as committed to Jesus Christ as others are to their false gods? Men can become very dedicated to false religion because all false religion is motivated by the Devil. Men can have great religious zeal and still be infinitely separated from the true God as He is manifested in Christ. Recently we have seen the kind of devotion fanatical, cultic worshippers can give one man. Nine hundred persons of the People's Temple in

Guyana are dead, half voluntarily committed suicide, in order to be a faithful follower of a demon possessed man, the Rev. Jim Jones. Men can be sincerely devoted to a religious cause and be sincerely wrong. ([Sermon](#))

**Acts 19:35 After quieting the crowd, the town clerk said, "Men of Ephesus, what man is there after all who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is guardian of the temple of the great Artemis and of the image which fell down from heaven?"**

NET Acts 19:35 After the city secretary quieted the crowd, he said, "Men of Ephesus, what person is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is the keeper of the temple of the great Artemis and of her image that fell from heaven?"

GNT Acts 19:35 καταστε λας δ γραμματε ς τ ν χλον φησ ν, νδρες φ σιοι, τ ς γ ρ σιν νθρ πων ς ο γιν σκει τ ν φεσ ων π λιν νεωκ ρον ο σαν τ ς μεγ λης ρτ μιδος κα το διοπετο ς;

NLT Acts 19:35 At last the mayor was able to quiet them down enough to speak. "Citizens of Ephesus," he said. "Everyone knows that Ephesus is the official guardian of the temple of the great Artemis, whose image fell down to us from heaven.

KJV 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?"

ESV Acts 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?"

ASV Acts 19:35 And when the townclerk had quieted the multitude, he saith, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there who knoweth not that the city of the Ephesians is temple-keeper of the great Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter?"

CSB Acts 19:35 However, when the city clerk had calmed the crowd down, he said, "Men of Ephesus! What man is there who doesn't know that the city of the Ephesians is the temple guardian of the great Artemis, and of the image that fell from heaven?"

NIV Acts 19:35 The city clerk quieted the crowd and said: "Men of Ephesus, 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?"

NKJ Acts 19:35 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?"

NRS Acts 19:35 But when the town clerk had quieted the crowd, he said, "Citizens of Ephesus, who is there that does not know that the city of the Ephesians is the temple keeper of the great Artemis and of the statue that fell from heaven?"

YLT Acts 19:35 And the public clerk having quieted the multitude, saith, 'Men, Ephesians, why, who is the man that doth not know that the city of the Ephesians is a devotee of the great goddess Artemis, and of that which fell down from Zeus?"

- **Men of Ephesus:** Eph 2:12
- **guardian of the temple of** - Ac 19:26 2Th 2:10,11 1Ti 4:2
- **which fell down from heaven** - Ac 14:12,13
- [Acts 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **TOWN CLERK TAKES CHARGE**

**After quieting the crowd, the town clerk said-** Note how when this city "CEO" appeared, the crowd quieted down to listen! He was the chief city officer, like our modern day mayors and were the locally elected executive official most responsible for what took place in the city. And he realized that the Roman authorities would hold him culpable for any riot that might break out!

**Quieting** (2687) (**katastellō** from **kata** = down + **stellō** = repress) means to restore order, restrain, bring under control, quell, assuage, pacify. Louw-Nida - to bring something under the firm control of someone. The usages of this word indicate that the one calming others is one of authority.

**McGee** - The town clerk was, of course, a local official who told them that they were making too much out of this whole thing. He says, "Look at this great temple and at the great Diana. Nothing could happen to them. Nothing could be said against them!" Now, of course, they have been in ruins for nearly two thousand years.

**Robertson on town clerk** - Ephesus was a free city and elected its own officers and the recorder or secretary was the chief magistrate of the city, though the proconsul of the province of Asia resided there. This officer is not a mere secretary of another officer or like the copyists and students of the law among the Jews, but the most influential person in Ephesus who drafted decrees with the aid of the *stratēgoi*, had charge of the city's money, was the power in control of the assembly, and communicated directly with the proconsul. Inscriptions at Ephesus give frequently this very title for their chief officer and the papyri have it also. The precise function varied in different cities. His name appeared on the coin at Ephesus issued in his year of office.

**Town clerk** (1122) (**grammateus** from **graphō** = to write) in this context describes the chief executive officer of a governmental entity such as a town official secretary, town clerk. As used most commonly in the NT it described one skilled in Jewish law and theology, hence scribe, expert, scholar (Mt 2.4).

**Constable** - He stated there was no danger whatsoever that people would conclude that Artemis was a goddess made with hands since everyone knew the image of her in her famous temple had fallen from heaven. "Do nothing rash" is still good advice. The town clerk was not a Christian, but he was a wise and diplomatic man.

**Men of Ephesus, what man is there after all who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is guardian of the temple of the great Artemis** - The town clerk was reminding the citizens of Ephesus, that they (the city) were in effect the caretakers and preservers of the temple in the goddess' honor. Inscriptions. There are coins dating back into the First Century A.D. which confirm, in language almost identical to Luke's, Ephesus' proud claim to be the *neōkoros* of Diana (Artemis).

**Guardian of the temple** (3511) (**neokoros** from **neos** - Attic of **naos** or temple + **koreō** = to sweep clean) literally means literally a temple sweeper and then temple keeper and is used only here in the NT. It was an official of a temple who also had charge of the decorations. In addition the title of "Guardian of the temple" or "temple keeper" was an honor which the Roman government bestowed on selected cities that possessed temples of the imperial cult (See [Imperial cult of ancient Rome](#))

**Vine on neokoros** - Coin inscriptions show that it was an honorary title given to certain cities, especially in Asia Minor, where the cult of some god or of a deified human potentate had been established, here to Ephesus in respect of the goddess Artemis. Apparently the imperial cult also existed at Ephesus. Josephus applies the word to Jews as worshipers, but this is not the meaning in Acts 19.

**Gilbrant** - The noun *neōkoros* can be found in classical Greek literature from the Fourth Century B.C. to describe lowly laborers or slaves whose responsibility it was to keep pagan temples swept and clean, hence a "temple sweeper." The word also assumed a more positive position of "temple keeper," one who was put in charge of the regular operation and maintenance of a temple. In literature from the First Century A.D. the word had been appropriated by some cities, especially in Asia Minor, as a proud title affirming that they had established and were maintaining temples to their patron gods or goddesses, or to the emperor (cf. *Liddell-Scott*). Thus, they had become temple "guardians" or "wardens." (Ibid)

**And of the image which fell down from heaven** - Presumably this refers to a meteorite but we cannot be more specific. Whatever it was this statement says that to the Ephesians this was a work of deity and had divine implications. Thus they justified their pagan worship of an idol. This indicates they had some sense of the fact that there is a God in Heaven even though their understanding was warped and perverted because they had chosen willfully to **suppress the truth** about God so that they might justify (in their foolish darkened hearts) their unrighteous behavior (Ro 1:18-21+).

**John Polhill** notes that "Meteorites were often associated with the worship of the Mother Goddess [Artemis]. The most famous of these was the sacred stone taken from Pessinus to Rome in 204 b.c. A meteorite also seems to have been associated with the cult of the Taurian Artemis. Although there is no evidence beyond this text for such a sacred stone being connected with the Ephesian cult, it is altogether likely that one existed, given this common association of the mother goddess with a "stone from heaven." (NAC)

**Jack Andrews** has a pithy remark - They were staking their eternal well-being on a rock that fell from the heavens! Christians stake their eternal well-being on the Rock that came from Heaven!

**NET Note** - The expression **fell from heaven** adds a note of apologetic about the heavenly origin of the goddess. The city's identity



and well-being was wrapped up with this connection, in their view. Many interpreters view her image that fell from heaven as a stone meteorite regarded as a sacred object.

**Pierson** - "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."

**Fell down from heaven** (1356) (**diopetes** from **Dios** = chief god of Greeks - Jupiter = **Zeus** the "sky god" + **pipto** = to fall) means "fallen from Zeus," (or 'the sky') or an image that fell from the statue of Jupiter. BDAG writes that "meteorites viewed as heaven-sent cult objects."

**Acts 19:36 "So, since these are undeniable facts, you ought to keep calm and to do nothing rash."**

NET Acts 19:36 So because these facts are indisputable, you must keep quiet and not do anything reckless.

GNT Acts 19:36 ναντιρρ των ο ν ντων το των δ ο ν σ τ ν μ ς κατεσταλμ νους π ρχειν κα μηδ ν προπετ ς πρ σσειν.

NLT Acts 19:36 Since this is an undeniable fact, you should stay calm and not do anything rash.

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

ESV Acts 19:36 Seeing then that these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rash.

ASV Acts 19:36 Seeing then that these things cannot be gainsaid, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rash.

CSB Acts 19:36 Therefore, since these things are undeniable, you must keep calm and not do anything rash.

NIV Acts 19:36 Therefore, since these facts are undeniable, you ought to be quiet and not do anything rash.

NKJ Acts 19:36 "Therefore, since these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rashly.

NRS Acts 19:36 Since these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rash.

YLT Acts 19:36 these things, then, not being to be gainsaid, it is necessary for you to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly.

- **you ought to keep calm:** Ac 5:35-39 Pr 14:29 25:8
- [Acts 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **CITY CLERK CALLING FOR RESTORATION OF ORDER**

**So, since these are undeniable facts** - What are **these...facts**? The greatness of Artemis was secure.

**Undeniable** (368) (**anantirretos** from **a** = without + **anti** = against + **ereo** = to speak) means not to be spoken against or contradicted and hence indisputable.

**You ought to keep calm and to do nothing rash** - It is needful to keep quiet.

**Keep calm** (2687) see [katastello](#)

**Rash** (reckless) (4312) (**propetes** from **propípto** = fall forward in turn from **pró** = forward + **pípto** = fall) is literally falling forward or headlong. It was used to describe one slipping down in bed. Figuratively as used here, it gives a vivid picture of pagan Ephesians marked by or proceeding from undue haste or lack of deliberation or caution. They plunge ahead without forethought in their impetuous deeds.

**MacArthur** - Nothing the Christian preachers could do, he insisted, could possibly affect their great goddess; Artemis's power was undeniable, and her reputation secure. Although the man was sincere, he was tragically mistaken. Today, no one worships Artemis, yet millions worship the Lord Jesus Christ. (Ibid)

NET Acts 19:37 For you have brought these men here who are neither temple robbers nor blasphemers of our goddess.

GNT Acts 19:37 γ γετε γ ρ το ς νδρας το τους ο τε εροσ λους ο τε βλασφημο ντας τ ν θε ν μ ν.

NLT Acts 19:37 You have brought these men here, but they have stolen nothing from the temple and have not spoken against our goddess.

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

ESV Acts 19:37 For you have brought these men here who are neither sacrilegious nor blasphemers of our goddess.

ASV Acts 19:37 For ye have brought hither these men, who are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of our goddess.

CSB Acts 19:37 For you have brought these men here who are not temple robbers or blasphemers of our goddess.

NIV Acts 19:37 You have brought these men here, though they have neither robbed temples nor blasphemed our goddess.

NKJ Acts 19:37 "For you have brought these men here who are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of your goddess.

NRS Acts 19:37 You have brought these men here who are neither temple robbers nor blasphemers of our goddess.

YLT Acts 19:37 'For ye brought these men, who are neither temple-robbers nor speaking evil of your goddess;

- **who are neither robbers of temples** - Ac 25:8 1Co 10:32 2Co 6:3
- [Acts 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **TOWN CLERK VINDICATES GAIUS AND ARISTARCHUS**

To **vindicate** means to free from allegation or blame and implies a complete clearance from the accusations or charges and from any attendant suspicion of blame or guilt. From *vindicare*, meaning "to set free, avenge, or lay claim to."

**For** (gar) is a [term of explanation](#) explaining why the mob should stay calm.

**Jack Arnold** makes a good point - Paul and the Christians had not stolen from the temple nor were they sacrilegious in any way. This verse tells us something about apostolic preaching. It was not preaching based on the negative. Paul preached Christ in a positive way and only pointed out the evils of idolatry to make a contrast. Paul opposed idolatry, reasoned against it and endeavored to turn people from it, but his presentation was not harsh, critical or reproachful. Paul did not entitle his first message in Ephesus "Seven Wrong Things About Artemis." No, he preached Christ, "Solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21). He encouraged men to turn first to God and then from idols, ". . . and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God" (1 Thess. 1:9). Christians gain nothing by a negative approach with bitter and reviling words. We must preach Christ. When men meet Him, they will turn from idols. ([Sermon](#))

**You have brought these men here who are neither robbers of temples** - A good testimony from a pagan as to the character of the believers!

**Constable** - Gaius and Aristarchus had done nothing worthy of punishment. They had neither physically damaged anything nor had they spoken against Artemis. Robbing temples and blaspheming other gods were common accusations that Gentiles made against Jews, including Jewish Christians, in antiquity.

**Nor blasphemers of our goddess** - The town clerk adds that the believers did not slander or defame Artemis.

**NET Note** - There was no formal crime with which Paul could be charged. He had the right to his religion as long as he did not act physically against the temple. Since no overt act had taken place, the official wanted the community to maintain the status quo on

these religious matters. The remarks suggest Paul was innocent of any civil crime.

**Acts 19:38 "So then, if Demetrius and the craftsmen who are with him have a complaint against any man, the courts are in session and proconsuls are available; let them bring charges against one another."**

NET Acts 19:38 If then Demetrius and the craftsmen who are with him have a complaint against someone, the courts are open and there are proconsuls; let them bring charges against one another there.

GNT Acts 19:38 ε μ ν ο ν Δημ τριος κα ο σ ν α τ τεχν ται χουσι πρ ς τινα λ γον, γορα οι γονται κα νθ πατο ε σιν, γκαλε τωσαν λλ λους.

NLT Acts 19:38 "If Demetrius and the craftsmen have a case against them, the courts are in session and the officials can hear the case at once. Let them make formal charges.

KJV 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.

ESV Acts 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.

ASV Acts 19:38 If therefore Demetrius, and the craftsmen that are with him, have a matter against any man, the courts are open, and there are proconsuls: let them accuse one another.

CSB Acts 19:38 So if Demetrius and the craftsmen who are with him have a case against anyone, the courts are in session, and there are proconsuls. Let them bring charges against one another.

NIV Acts 19:38 If, then, Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a grievance against anybody, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. They can press charges.

NKJ Acts 19:38 "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.

NRS Acts 19:38 If therefore Demetrius and the artisans with him have a complaint against anyone, the courts are open, and there are proconsuls; let them bring charges there against one another.

YLT Acts 19:38 if indeed, therefore, Demetrius and the artificers with him with any one have a matter, court days are held, and there are proconsuls; let them accuse one another.

- **Demetrius:** Ac 19:24
- **have a complaint** Ac 18:14 De 17:8 1Co 6:1
- [Acts 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **TOWN CLERK TELLS THEM TAKE YOUR CASE TO COURT**

**So then, if Demetrius and the craftsmen who are with him have a complaint against any man-** **Complaint** is logos, a "word" against them.

**The courts are in session** - "if Demetrius and his workers have an accusation against someone, the courts are open."

**And proconsuls are available** - As noted below the proconsuls were the provincial governors. [Wikipedia](#) adds "A **proconsul** was an official of [ancient Rome](#) who acted on behalf of a [consul](#). A proconsul was typically a former consul. The term is also used in recent history for officials with delegated authority."

**Proconsuls** (KJV = "deputy")(5119)(**anthupatos** from **anti** = instead of + **hupatos** = highest, supreme, consul) literally means instead of a [consul](#). A **proconsul** was a governor of a senatorial province in the Roman Empire. The Greeks used to word consul because after the expulsion of the kings, the consuls had the supreme or highest authority in the Roman government. "A **proconsul**, a person sent as governor into a Roman province with consular power which was very intensive. Augustus, at the beginning of his reign, divided the provinces into two parts; one of which he gave wholly over to the people, and the other which he reserved for himself. After this, the governors who were sent into the first division bore the name of proconsuls though they were denied the whole military power, and so fell short of the old proconsuls." (Complete Word Study Dictionary)

**Let them bring charges** against one another (1458)(**egkaleo** from **en** = in + **kaleo** = ) means to call in as one would a debt or demand, to bring to account, to accuse. **Egkaleo** in classic Greek was legal technical term meaning “to bring charges against, prosecute.”

**Egkaleo** - 7x - accused(4), accusing(1), bring a charge(1), bring charges against(1).

Acts 19:38; Acts 19:40; Acts 23:28; Acts 23:29; Acts 26:2; Acts 26:7; Rom. 8:33

**Egkaleo** in the **Septuagint** - Ex. 22:9; Pr. 19:5; Zech. 1:4

**Acts 19:39 But if you want anything beyond this, it shall be settled in the lawful assembly.**

NET Acts 19:39 But if you want anything in addition, it will have to be settled in a legal assembly.

GNT Acts 19:39 ε ὃ τι περαιτ ρω πιζητε τε, ν τ νν μ κκλησ πιλυθ σεται.

NLT Acts 19:39 And if there are complaints about other matters, they can be settled in a legal assembly.

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

ESV Acts 19:39 But if you seek anything further, it shall be settled in the regular assembly.

ASV Acts 19:39 But if ye seek anything about other matters, it shall be settled in the regular assembly.

CSB Acts 19:39 But if you want something else, it must be decided in a legal assembly.

NIV Acts 19:39 If there is anything further you want to bring up, it must be settled in a legal assembly.

NKJ Acts 19:39 "But if you have any other inquiry to make, it shall be determined in the lawful assembly.

NRS Acts 19:39 If there is anything further you want to know, it must be settled in the regular assembly.

YLT Acts 19:39 'And if ye seek after anything concerning other matters, in the legal assembly it shall be determined;

- **lawful** Ac 19:39
- [Acts 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **TOWN CLERK REITERATES THE LEGAL ROUTE**

**But if you want anything beyond this** - "Anything more than this."

**It shall be settled in the lawful assembly**- "In a legal meeting of citizens." Refers to a legal meeting of the citizens, which normally took place three times each month.

**John Phillips** - A mob, after all, is a fickle monster. Its passions are easily aroused and can be dangerous in the extreme. It can be made to chant and shout, but it can just as easily be made to fear. At heart, a mob is a coward. Certainly Demetrius had no more desire to draw attention to himself. Probably the more thoughtful ones in that assembly were already slinking away, hoping that their presence and participation in the riot might not be remembered or even noticed by the officials. (Exploring Acts: An Expository Commentary)

**Constable** - the mayor reminded the citizens that if the provincial authorities concluded that there was no good reason for their rioting they could impose penalties on the city.

**Shall be settled** (1956)(**epiluo** from **epi** = upon, used to intensify + **luo** = to loose, unbind, untie) means literally to "loose upon," to release, to set free, to loose, and figuratively was used to clarify the parables (only use Mk 4:34+), to explain or interpret them. In the only other NT use in Acts 19:39- it meant resolving, deciding or putting an end to a dispute ("it **shall be settled** in the lawful assembly.")

**Acts 19:40 "For indeed we are in danger of being accused of a riot in connection with today's events, since there is no real**

NET Acts 19:40 For we are in danger of being charged with rioting today, since there is no cause we can give to explain this disorderly gathering." 41 After he had said this, he dismissed the assembly.

GNT Acts 19:40 καὶ ὁ κινδυνεύειν γὰρ λέγειν ὅτι σέως περὶ τὸ σήμερον, μηδὲν ἔατο τοῦ πρὸς τοὺς ῥωμαίους περὶ τοῦ [ο] ὧν ἡσθαί ποδοῦναι λόγον περὶ τὸ συστροφῆς ταύτης. καὶ ταῦτα ἐπὶ πλυσεν τὸν κλήρον.

NLT Acts 19:40 I am afraid we are in danger of being charged with rioting by the Roman government, since there is no cause for all this commotion. And if Rome demands an explanation, we won't know what to say." 41 Then he dismissed them, and they dispersed.

KJV 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. 41 And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.

ESV Acts 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." 41 And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly.

ASV Acts 19:40 For indeed we are in danger to be accused concerning this day's riot, there being no cause for it: and as touching it we shall not be able to give account of this concourse. 41 And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.

CSB Acts 19:40 In fact, we run a risk of being charged with rioting for what happened today, since there is no justification that we can give as a reason for this disorderly gathering." 41 After saying this, he dismissed the assembly.

NIV Acts 19:40 As it is, we are in danger of being charged with rioting because of today's events. 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.

NKJ Acts 19:40 "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.

NRS Acts 19:40 For we are in danger of being charged with rioting today, since there is no cause that we can give to justify this commotion." 41 When he had said this, he dismissed the assembly.

YLT Acts 19:40 for we are also in peril of being accused of insurrection in regard to this day, there being no occasion by which we shall be able to give an account of this concourse;" 41 and these things having said, he dismissed the assembly.

- **For indeed we are in danger of being accused-** Ac 17:5-8
- **of a riot in connection with today's events** - Ac 20:1 21:31,38 1Ki 1:41 Mt 26:5
- [Acts 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## TOWN CLERK SOBERLY WARNS

They were in danger of being accused by the Romans of causing an **insurrection** - an act or instance of revolting against civil authority or an established government.

**For indeed we are in danger of being accused of a riot in connection with today's events-** They were running a risk with this unruly gathering, [treading on thin ice](#) as the saying goes! Clearly local Roman leaders feared insurrections. This would threaten Roman rule and invite Roman retaliation on the city, which was not a good thing! The Romans put people to death who engaged in riots against the state.

**Are in danger** (present tense)(2793)([kinduneuo](#) from **kindunos** = danger from **kineo** = to move, put in motion) means they were in peril, facing danger or running the risk a risk of the disciplining wrath of Rome. Luke had used this same verb earlier Acts 19:27 where Demetrius reasoned "Not only is there **danger** that this trade of ours fall into disrepute, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis be regarded as worthless and that she whom all of Asia and the world worship will even be dethroned from her magnificence." How ironic! How interesting and just like our sovereign God to turn the tables - in v27 it was Paul who was in

potential danger and now it is the pagans who are potential danger! And it is notable that Paul was never found guilty by any Roman official, neither here or later.

**Being accused** (1458) see [egkaleo](#)

**Riot** (4714) (**stasis** from **histemi** = to stand) means first a stance or posture (Heb 9:8), then figuratively sedition, an insurrection or an uprising, the very accusation made against Paul (Acts 24:5).

**Since there is no real cause for it** - As he has just stated in v37 that Gaius and Aristarchus were **"neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of our goddess."**

**And in this connection we will be unable to account for this disorderly gathering**- "since there is no cause concerning which we can give account concerning this disorderly gathering." NLT - "And if Rome demands an explanation, we won't know what to say."

**MacArthur** - If the Romans investigated the disturbance, the Ephesians would be unable to defend their actions. That could result in the loss of the privileges the Romans had granted them. His arguments were persuasive

**I Howard Marshall** - The clerk's final words betray his fear that the holding of an extraordinary meeting of the assembly which had turned into a near-riot might have serious repercussions. Sherwin-White (pp. 83-85) cites interesting evidence from this period which shows that the Romans were anxious to get rid of these democratic assemblies; the town clerk of Prusa addressed his assembly in remarkably similar terms, warning his hearers about the drastic consequences of reports of unruly gatherings reaching the proconsul. (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries – Acts)

**Disorderly gathering** (4963) (**sustrophe** from **sun** = together + **stropho** = to turn) described a turning or spinning together, as in a whirlwind, hence a "twisting together" of a dense mass of people. Then a disorderly gathering for a negative purpose. A riotous gathering together, a public tumult

**Gilbrant** - The word *sustrophē* is composed of two terms, *sun* (4713), "with," and *trophē* (5001), "to turn." It is used throughout classical Greek writings with both literal and metaphoric meanings. Literally, it refers to things that are twisted together, for example, yarn, chalkstones, nerves and sinews, twisted grain in wood, etc. The term is used likewise by classical writers in reference to a flock of birds, and even to the twisting together of a knot (Liddell-Scott). Metaphorically, it is used to denote communication between men in the form of a conspiracy or coalition, or a disorderly gathering such as a riot, as noted in the writings of Herodotus and Polybius (Bauer). The Septuagint uses the term with the same diversity as classical Greek. Judges 14:8 uses the term in reference to Samson's "swarm of bees" and the honey in the carcass. In this sense the "gathering" is of physical objects. In 2 Kings 15:15 *sustrophē* is used of the "conspiracy" of Shallum when he overthrew the evil king Zachariah. Similarly it is used in David's prayer to God against those who would bring an "insurrection" against him (Psalm 64:2), and in Amaziah's accusation of "conspiracy" against Jeroboam (Amos 7:10). In Hosea *sustrophē* is used twice. The first appearance is in 4:19 where it denotes the whirlwind (cf. the "spirit of whoredom" in 4:12), spoken of earlier, that will consume them (Wolff, Hermeneia, Hosea, p.92). In Hosea 13:12 Israel's sin is "bound up"; i.e., in keeping with the legal tone of the passage, their guilt remains as though laid away in a nonreversible legal record (ibid., p.228)..

#### Acts 19:41 After saying this he dismissed the assembly.

NET Acts 19:40 For we are in danger of being charged with rioting today, since there is no cause we can give to explain this disorderly gathering." 41 After he had said this, he dismissed the assembly.

GNT Acts 19:40 καὶ ὅτι κινδυνεύομεν ὑποκαλεσθαι σήμεως περὶ τῆς συστοφῆς ταύτης, καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδὲν ὃ ὃν ἡμεῖς ποιοῦναι ἵνα γινώσκωμεν περὶ τῆς συστοφῆς ταύτης. καὶ ταῦτα εἰπὼν πᾶσι διαλύσεν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν.

NLT Acts 19:40 I am afraid we are in danger of being charged with rioting by the Roman government, since there is no cause for all this commotion. And if Rome demands an explanation, we won't know what to say." 41 Then he dismissed them, and they dispersed.

KJV 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. 41 And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.

ESV Acts 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." 41 And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly.

ASV Acts 19:40 For indeed we are in danger to be accused concerning this day's riot, there being no cause for it: and as touching it we shall not be able to give account of this concourse. 41 And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.

CSB Acts 19:40 In fact, we run a risk of being charged with rioting for what happened today, since there is no justification that we can give as a reason for this disorderly gathering." 41 After saying this, he dismissed the assembly.

NIV Acts 19:40 As it is, we are in danger of being charged with rioting because of today's events. 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.

NKJ Acts 19:40 "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.

NRS Acts 19:40 For we are in danger of being charged with rioting today, since there is no cause that we can give to justify this commotion." 41 When he had said this, he dismissed the assembly.

YLT Acts 19:40 for we are also in peril of being accused of insurrection in regard to this day, there being no occasion by which we shall be able to give an account of this concourse;' 41 and these things having said, he dismissed the assembly.

- **After saying:** Pr 15:1,2 Ec 9:17
- **he dismissed:** Ps 65:7 2Co 1:8-10
- [Acts 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **TOWN CLERK DISMISSES THE MOB**

**After saying this he dismissed the assembly-** It reminds me of when I was in school "Class dismissed!" In this case mob dismissed.

**Jack Arnold** - The town clerk dismissed the assembly but God was behind this move in order to protect Paul and the other Christians in Ephesus. God has His own way of putting down opposition to Christianity.

**Warren Wiersbe** sums up the scene - Ephesus is gone, and so is the worldwide worship of Diana of the Ephesians. The city and the temple are gone, and the silversmiths' guild is gone. Ephesus is a place visited primarily by archaeologists and people on Holy Land tours. Yet the Gospel of God's grace and the church of Jesus Christ are still here! We have four inspired letters that were sent to the saints in Ephesus—Ephesians, 1 and 2 Timothy, and Revelation 2:1-7. The name of Paul is honored, but the name of Demetrius is forgotten. (Bible Exposition Commentary)

**MacArthur** notes that apparently when the town clerk **dismissed the assembly** "they went quietly. As far as is known, Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen did not pursue the matter any further. The Ephesian believers weathered the storm of persecution unleashed by Demetrius's speech and the resulting riot. Indeed, the church at Ephesus would play a prominent role in church history for several centuries. So again in Acts, God caused the wrath of men to praise Him (Ps. 76:10)."

**Dismissed** (630)([apoluo](#) from **apó** = marker of dissociation, implying a rupture from a former association, separation + **luo** = loose) is used often of sending a person or a group away from someone. It is interesting that this word was a legal technical term for dismissing an accused party as innocent, which in a manner of speaking is what the town clerk did to the raucous crowd!

**Assembly** (1577)([ekklesia](#) from **ek** = out + **klesis** = a calling, verb = **kaleo** = to call) literally means called out (but see note by Louw-Nida below) and as commonly used in the Greco-Roman vernacular referred to citizens who were *called out* from their homes to be publicly assembled or gathered to discuss or carry out affairs of state.

**Stanley Toussaint** says that "While Paul was at Ephesus, he wrote 1 Corinthians as well as an earlier letter to the Corinthians that is not part of the biblical canon (cf. 1 Cor. 5:9). In addition he made a third visit to Corinth which is unrecorded in Acts (cf. 2 Cor. 12:14; 13:1) (BKC)

**Steven Cole** - People oppose the gospel because Satan has blinded them and the gospel confronts their sin; but God rules over all. When the church effectively spreads the gospel, Satan will arouse opposition.

**Constable** has an interesting note - One wonders if the cooling of the Ephesian Christians' love for Jesus Christ that took place in later years connects to the zeal for Artemis that characterized this community (cf. Rev. 2:1-7+).

The apostle John wrote the following about 40 years (estimate) after this event at Ephesus...

"To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this: 2 'I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false; 3 and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary. 4' But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. 5 'Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent. 6'Yet this you do have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. 7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.'

**Warren Wiersbe** wrote, "The church ministers by persuasion, not propaganda. We share God's truth, not man's religious lies. Our motive is love, not anger; and the glory of God, not the praise of men. This is why the church goes on, and we must keep it so."

**Cole** writes "I could not find the exact quote, but T. W. Manson once said something like, "These early disciples were completely fearless, outrageously happy, and constantly in trouble." This story makes me ask, "Am I doing anything significant enough on behalf of God's kingdom to stir up the enemy's opposition?" I realize that God sometimes grants the church times of peace (Ac 9:31). I also realize that the freedom of religion in our country assures us a certain amount of protection from persecution. But I also think that we should ponder G. Campbell Morgan's words (below in bold font).

**G Campbell Morgan** reminds us of an important principle that comes out of the pagan persecution of Christians - "Let us be very careful that we do not waste our energy, and miss the meaning of our high calling, by any rejoicing in the patronage of the world. It is by the friction of persecution that the fine gold of character is made to flash and gleam with glory.

**The church persecuted has always been the church pure, and therefore the church powerful.**

**The church patronized has always been the church in peril, and very often the church paralyzed.**

I am not afraid of Demetrius. Let him have his meeting of craftsmen, and let them in their unutterable folly shout a lie twenty-five thousand strong. The truth goes quietly on. But when the town clerk begins to take care of us, then God deliver us from the peril."