

Notes for Acts - Chapter 19: "Impact of the Christian Church"

A Summary of Chapter 19:

- The whole chapter takes place in the City of Ephesus. It is part of modern Turkey.
- Verses 1-7: Paul encounters 12 men who only know Jesus via John-The-Baptist.
 1. Paul explains the whole story of Jesus. They believe it. They receive the Holy Spirit.
 2. They start speaking in tongues and prophesying.
- Verses 8-12: Paul preaches to the Ephesians
 1. He spends 3 months (i.e., every Saturday) in the Synagogue.
 2. After 3 months, the non-believing Jesus start to persecute Paul.
 3. Paul rents a hall in town. He preaches there for the next two years.
 4. The author Luke records that “extra”-ordinary miracles were performed.
- Verses 13-16: Seven sons of a rabbi (non-Christians) try to cast out demons via Jesus’ name.
 1. The demons-in the one possessed man don’t leave. They assault the 7 “sons”.
 2. The story is made known through the town. It leads to new converts.
- Verses 17-20: The story of the “demon-mugging” has an affect upon the believing Christians.
 1. Christians-who-were-formerly into sorcery, repent and publicly burn their books.
- Verses 21-22: Paul announces it is time to move on and wrap up the 3rd Missionary Journey.
- Verses 23-28: There is a riot in the Temple of Artemis.
 1. The main attraction of Ephesus was the Temple of Artemis (a.k.a. Diana)
 2. This was one of the 7 wonders of the world. It was a tourist attraction.
 3. The growth of Christianity meant decline in Artemis-worship and sales of idols.
 4. The idol makers afraid of losing their income, start a riot.
 5. Paul is prevented from speaking at this occasion.
 6. The city official quiets the crowd. End of chapter.

Introduction – How does a local Christian Church impact its community?

- It leads others to salvation!
- It can impact the community by simply growing and leading others to maturity in their faith. There are people in the area who are no longer staying home on Sunday mornings.
- It can impact the community by decreasing illicit activities or decreases cult membership.
- Members can teach people about the misconceptions people have about Christianity.
- You can show people what Christians are *really* like, and not just media-based stereotypes.
- This is the common-thread of the events of Chapter 19: The church *impacts* the community.

Verses 1-7 Paul encounters 12 men who only know Jesus via John-The-Baptist

- Near the end of Chapter 18, we read of Apollos speaking boldly about Jesus, yet he only knew Jesus via the teaching of John-The-Baptist.
- These 12 men were disciples of that teaching.
- Luke calls them “disciples”, yet they were not born-again yet. They were later saved.
- Disciples simply mean “followers”.
- Paul asked them, “Have you received the Holy Spirit?” How did Paul know they haven’t yet?
 - But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23a NIV)
- The 12 men received the gift of “tongues” and “prophesied”.
 - “Tongues” is the ability to praise God in a foreign language. (Discussed in Acts 2 handouts).
 - “Prophesying” is the supernatural gift of 1) explaining the scriptures 2) predicting future.

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Verses 8-12: Paul preaches to the Ephesians (3 months in a Synagogue, 2 years in a rental hall)

- After 3 months the Jews who “refused” to believe persecuted Paul.
- This is “blasphemy of the Holy Spirit”, as spoken by Jesus (Matthew 12:31). If one denies Jesus for a long length of time, the heart “hardens” to a point where they can’t believe.
 - It is the only unpardonable sin in the Bible.
- Paul rents a hall for 2 years. In this culture, people worked mornings & nights, and took the afternoons off. That is when Paul spoke in the rental hall. It is similar to a Spanish “siesta”.
- Paul’s daily preaching caused church growth in Ephesus and the surrounding communities.
- The church grew from Paul’s daily Bible lessons. Jesus has “cross-generational appeal!” ?
- In Rev. 2 & 3, there are 7 churches mentioned. They were founded during this 2-year period.
- Christians were called “The Way”. The term “Christian” had not caught on yet.
- It comes from Jesus’ quote of “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life and no man comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6 NKJV, NIV, et.al.)
- God worked miracles via Paul’s sweatbands being carried to the sick.
 - God uses our “sweat” in our service to him to further glorify His name.
 - Beware of tele-evangelists offering to sell you their sweatbands! ☺

Verses 13-16: Seven sons of a rabbi (non-Christians) try to cast out demons via Jesus’ name.

- Moral: You can’t cast out demons in Jesus name without being a Christian first.
 - You can’t have the power of being a Christian without the willingness to pay the price!
- Jews have ancient rituals for exorcisms. Rabbis were paid for this service. Apparently, their method didn’t work, so these seven guys tried using Jesus’ name.
- Exorcism is considered a spiritual gift. Casting out demons is not to be taken lightly!
- There are 2 mistakes to make about demons: 1) they don’t exist or 2) they’re responsible for all evil, as if our own human nature cannot be blamed.

Verses 17-20: The story of the “demon-mugging” has an affect upon the believing Christians.

- Christians-who-were-formerly into sorcery, repent and publicly burn their books.
- The value of the burning scrolls were 50,000 “drachmas”. A drachma is a day’s wage.
- They didn’t steal scrolls of non-Christians and burn them. They focus on their own sins!
 - Moral: Ask God if there is any sin in your life that needs “burning”.
- The public confessions lead others to Christianity. Let others see the change in your life!

Verses 21-22: Paul announces it is time to move on and wrap up the 3rd Missionary Journey.

- Paul announces he must visit Rome. To paraphrase J. Campbell Morgan “This is not the ‘must’ of a tourist, this is the ‘must’ of a missionary”.
- That’s a clue to your Christian service: “What is the “must’s” of your life?”

Verses 23-28: There is a riot in the Temple of Artemis.

- The Temple of Artemis (a.k.a., Diana) was needed to keep the City alive, economically.
 - Ephesians made money by the tourists coming to town.
 - Silversmiths sold little statues of Artemis (see next page)
- Sometimes committing your life to Jesus will cost you financially.
 - Jesus said, “Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it?” (Luke 14:28, NIV)

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Verses 23-28: There is a riot in the Temple of Artemis (cont.)

- The “Pro-Artemis” speech started a riot. Paul was prevented to speak to save his life.
 - Paul said, “If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus for merely human reasons, what have I gained? (1st Cor. 15:32a, NIV) Most commentators believed Paul was referring to this event.
- The City Clerk calmed the crowd and stopped the riot. A City-Clerk is like a town-mayor.
 - The success of Paul preaching on Jesus had an impact to cause this riot.
- The economic decline caused by the growth of Christianity caused the locals to rebel.
 - Don’t expect the world to “let the Christians be”, especially if it affects their pocketbook!
- We don’t have to preach the evils of teaching false Gods. We just have to preach Jesus.

The Holy Spirit does the rest.

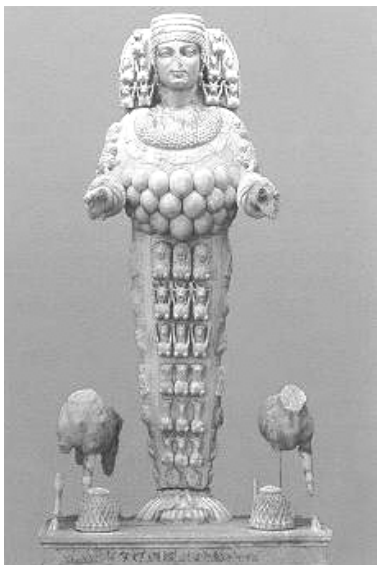
- Jesus said, "When he (Holy Spirit) comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment" (John 16:8, NIV).



This is the Artemis Temple at time of Paul.



This is the Temple-site as it looks today.



This is a statue of Artemis (or Diana).

She was worshipped as the goddess of animals, agriculture and fertility.

Those are all breasts between her arms; they are symbols of her “fertility”.

This is one of the silver shrines that was made as souvenirs for the local tourists.