

Chapter 19

- **Paul's extended 2-year stay in Ephesus. (19:1-41)**

Summary
Saul in Ephesus (19:1-41) <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Paul brings the baptism of the Holy Spirit to believers in Ephesus.○ Paul preaches in the synagogue for more than three months until he encounters resistance.○ Paul takes his message to the gentiles, preaching in the lecture hall of Tyrannus and doing miracles.○ Jewish exorcists begin to cast out demons in the name of Jesus, but are overpowered by a demon. The word of the Lord grows mightily and prevails among both Jews and Greeks.○ Paul resolves to visit Macedonia and Achaia (Greece) and sends Timothy and Erastus ahead of him.○ A dispute arises with Ephesian business leaders who have a commercial interest in the worship of Artemis, the chief divinity of Ephesus. (The Temple of Artemis in Ephesus was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.) The business leaders rile up Greek crowds. The mob scene is quieted by a Greek official who successfully appeals for rule of law, noting that Paul and the disciples were not criminals.

- **Paul's third missionary journey. (20:1-38)**

Summary
Paul's third missionary journey. (20:1-38) <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Paul travels to Macedonia, then Greece (Corinth), where he stays for three months before departing again for Macedonia under threat from the Jews.○ The "we" passages resume at Philippi (vs 6) where they had left off (16:17), implying that the author of Luke has rejoined Paul's party and what follows is an eyewitness account.○ Paul meets with believers in Troas and resurrects a boy who had fallen from a third story window after being put to sleep by Paul's monologue.○ Paul makes rapid progress on his journey through Assos, Mitylene, Chios, Samos, Miletus. He is eager to get to Jerusalem before Pentecost.○ In Miletus Paul sends for elders of the Ephesian church to travel down to meet him. In a farewell address, he tells them that "as a captive of the Holy Spirit" he is enroute to Jerusalem where he faces persecution and imprisonment. He will not see them again, but enjoins them to watch over the flock in Ephesus "of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers," and warns them that "savage wolves" threaten the flock. Paul reminds them of his diligent service among them for three years, how he had not coveted gold or silver but had supported himself, and urges them to follow his example of supporting the weak: "for it is better to give than receive." There is prayer and much weeping as Paul embraces them and says a final goodbye.

Framing Questions from Tim's e-mail:

This Sunday we will be looking at Acts chapters 19 and 20. Chapter 19 is all about Paul's 2-years building up the church at Ephesus, and Chapter 20 is about the launching of his third missionary journey. There is a lot going on in these chapters, but it is worth highlighting four key features.

1. **The Holy Spirit re-emerges as a key theme.** When Paul arrives in Ephesus it has already been evangelized by a godly believing Jew named Appolos who preached the baptism of John the Baptist –

that is the baptism of repentance. We read in chapter 18 that Priscilla and Aquila set him straight, but when Paul arrives in Ephesus he finds, unsurprisingly, that the believers there, like Appolos, had received the baptism of John only. Paul lays his hands on them and they receive the Spirit. Then Paul demonstrates the power of the Spirit through miracles, and we are reminded that miracles are very different from magic in a comic account of Jewish magicians who try to cast out demons in the name of Jesus and are overpowered and “run away naked.” Look for additional interesting references to the Spirit.

2. **There is an interesting commentary on the clash between faith and commerce.** In chapter 19 Silversmiths and other artisans see their business interests being threatened by Paul’s message which undermines the Artemis cult and commercial activity around the temple of Artemis. Artemis was the goddess of banking and her temple in Ephesus was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. There is a riot, which is calmed by a Roman official but the excitement of story should not obscure a central warning from Luke, that there can be an essential conflict between the pursuit of wealth and the pursuit of God, and sometimes disciples are called to take a stand. It is a theme that is picked up again in chapter 20 when Paul reminds the Ephesian elders that he coveted no-one’s silver or gold or clothing.
3. **We sense the beginning of a Passion Narrative:** Chapter 20 is in some ways the beginning of the end of the book of Acts, because the third missionary journey never really ends. It is a journey that loops back to Jerusalem and ultimately to Rome. And Luke is quite explicit in drawing parallels with Jesus’ final journey to Jerusalem. A darkness begins to fall over the narrative. At the end of the chapter there is a touching farewell scene with the Ephesian elders as they grieve because Paul had said he would not see them again. Paul knows where he is going. He is following in Jesus’ footsteps. He is taking up his cross as all disciples are called to do.