

Horton Road Church of Christ ~ October 27, 2010
Wednesday Bible Study Notes ~ Acts 19
Teacher: Jeremy Hoover

Study Notes

The entirety of chapter 19 takes place in Ephesus and demonstrates to us the power of God that is at work in Paul. In Ephesus, which was both an important geographic location and an important theological location for the church, Paul begins the church, preaches at length to both Jews and Gentiles, and demonstrates God's power over magic through his preaching and person.

19:1-7

By now, many of these events are typical rather than unique to Paul's missionary activity in a city, with just a few minor exceptions. As he arrives, we would expect him to go to a synagogue, which he does, but only after he meets these twelve disciples of John the Baptist who are flourishing all the way from Judea in Ephesus.

Paul's emphasis with these believers is whether they received the Holy Spirit. This can be taken in two ways--since they had not yet been baptized into Jesus, it's possible that Paul is referring to the actual Holy Spirit itself (Acts 2:38-39). However, since it could also refer to the powers of the Holy Spirit which is most often given in Acts through the laying on of hands (Acts 8:14-17), and which these disciples receive when Paul lays his hands on them after their baptisms into Jesus.

That there are "about twelve" of them is important; because Ephesus was such an important location in the ancient world, this number symbolically represents the completion of spiritual Israel among the Gentiles, much like the twelve apostles symbolically represent the completion of the nation of Israel among Jews.

19:8-10

This is a typical action of Paul--when he arrived in a city he went to the synagogue and preached. When he faced opposition, he left. In this case, when opposition arose, he left and went to a famous lecture hall where he could teach daily, and it became a base of operations for him for two years, so much so that Luke can summarize this period of time by saying that "all" the Jews and Greeks who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord.

19:11-22

This section demonstrates the power of God against magic that is at work in and through Paul's preaching and person. God is more powerful than magic. This is shown in three different ways--Paul's body has power from God such that clothing items that merely touch Paul are able to heal people and exorcise demons; demons themselves know who Paul is; many burn their magic scrolls in light of Paul's presence among

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them. Through Paul's ministry, this is a sound victory for God over the demonic forces that were present in Ephesus.

This section also concludes with Paul resolving to go to Jerusalem (which will bring with it much trial for him), much like Jesus resolved to do so in Luke's gospel (Luke 9:51).

19:23-41

This final section details another typical event in Paul's ministry in a city--a disturbance of some kind breaks out! In this case, it's a riot, instigated by a man (Demetrius) who stands to lose a lot if people turn from idolatry to the living God. He points out to the crowd that many of them who deal in the creation of idols will lose their businesses if this message takes hold. Of course, this ultimately leads to a riot, but with a twist. Paul is nowhere to be found during this riot because the disciples won't let him go to where the people are. Instead, a town clerk recognizes that the accusations don't have any merit to them! He calmly dismisses the crowd and the riot is over. This action by the clerk shows the integrity of the gospel and Paul's message, that it cannot be undermined by false accusations.

Study Questions

1. In 19:1-7, Paul's emphasis is on the Holy Spirit, not baptism. Why?
2. How could these believers be believers without even knowing there is a Holy Spirit? On what basis does one become a believer?
3. When were these believers baptized into Jesus? What mode of the Spirit did they receive? How did they receive the Spirit?
4. Why does Luke mention that there were "about twelve" of these disciples?
5. How long did Paul preach in Ephesus? (19:8-10)
6. In what three ways is the power of God demonstrated over magic in Ephesus? (19:11-20)
7. Why was Demetrius upset? What charges did he seek against Paul? How did the crowd get worked up? How did the crowd finally settle down? (19:23-40)
8. What applications can you take from this chapter?

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