ACTS 19

The Word Grew Mightily in Ephesus

twelve men who had not heard of the Spirit, a lecture hall for two years, a bonfire of magic books, and a city shouting for its goddess

> *"So the word of the Lord was growing mightily and prevailing."*
> ACTS 19:20

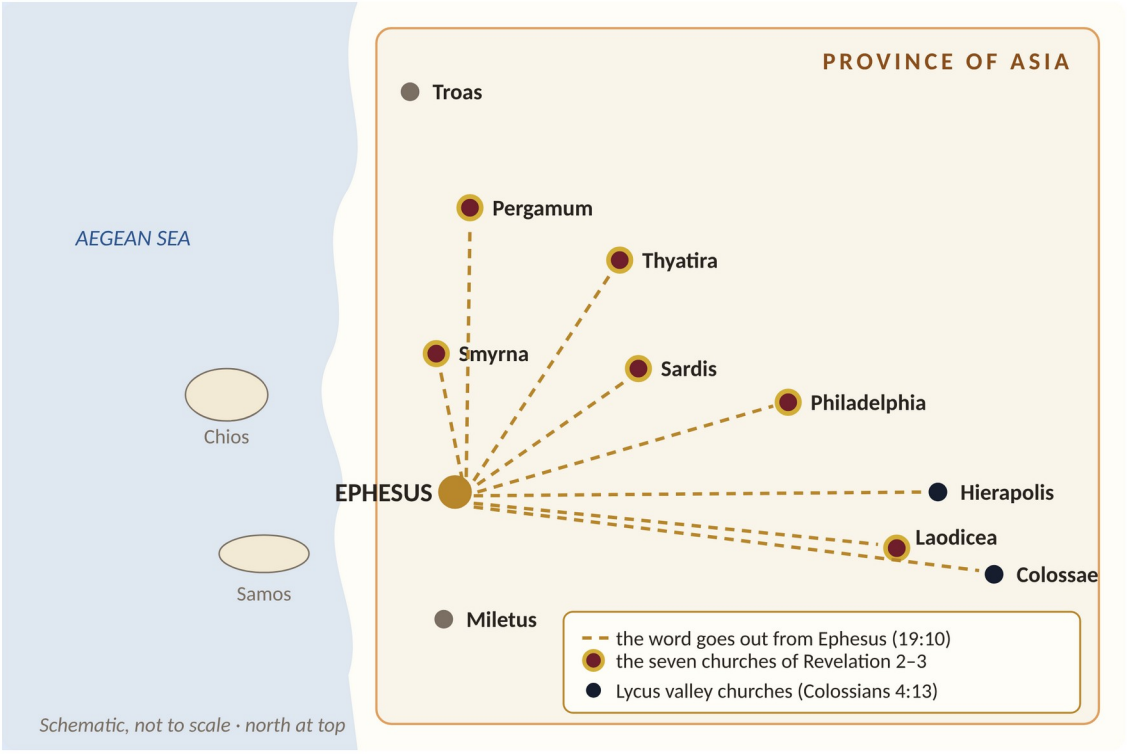
A SMITH FOR CHRIST STUDY · FOUR VOICES: GUZIK · SPROUL · SPURGEON · HENRY

Where Luke has brought us

1. Acts 19 is the heart of Paul's third missionary journey.

2. Ephesus was the leading city of the Roman province of Asia (western Turkey today), a port near the mouth of the Cayster river and home of one of the wonders of the ancient world, the temple of…

3. Paul stayed here longer than anywhere else on his journeys — three months in the synagogue and two years in the hall of Tyrannus (vv. 8–10); he later reminds the elders it was "three years" in all…



Into What Then Were You Baptized?

Twelve disciples who knew only John's baptism meet the Spirit of Jesus

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."

DAVID GUZIK

John's baptism was repentance, not yet saving faith; then filled and gifted.

C.H. SPURGEON

Not fountains but reservoirs; faith is the road, not just the start.

MATTHEW HENRY

Teach the untaught patiently; the Spirit is promised to all believers.

ἐλάβετε πιστεύσαντες

ELABETE PISTEUSANTES · "DID YOU RECEIVE … WHEN YOU BELIEVED"

Paul's question pairs two aorists: elabete, "did you receive" (from lambanō), and pisteusantes, "having believed" (from pisteuō).

The Spirit comes in Acts

THE SPIRIT COMES IN ACTS · FOUR SCENES, FOUR KINDS OF PEOPLE

	JERUSALEM Acts 2:1–4	SAMARIA Acts 8:14–17	CAESAREA Acts 10:44–46	EPHESUS Acts 19:1–7
WHO	Jews gathered at Pentecost	Samaritans baptized by Philip	Gentiles in Cornelius' house	about twelve men who knew John's
HOW	suddenly, from heaven, on all	Peter and John lay on hands	"while Peter was still speaking"	baptized in Jesus' name; Paul's hands
SIGN	"other tongues" (2:4)	no sign named by Luke	"speaking with tongues" (10:46)	tongues and prophesying (19:6)

Acts 1:8 — "in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth"

Each new circle receives the same Spirit, with the apostles there to witness it.

Read across: Luke shows the Spirit coming to Jews, Samaritans, Gentiles and John's disciples — the widening circles of Acts 1:8, with an apostle present each time.

Two Years in the Hall of Tyrannus

The synagogue hardens, the word moves next door, and all Asia hears

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.

DAVID GUZIK

Driven out of the synagogue, he equipped believers who reached all Asia.

C.H. SPURGEON

Scatter the seed; God decides where it falls.

MATTHEW HENRY

He preached argumentatively; God, not Paul, wrought the miracles.

σχολή

SCHOLĒ · "SCHOOL, LECTURE HALL"

The word first meant leisure — free time — and then the place where people with free time listened to a teacher; our word "school" comes from it.

Jesus I Know, and Paul I Know

The sons of Sceva, a bonfire of magic books, and a word that prevails

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.

DAVID GUZIK

No personal relationship with Jesus — no power over demons.

R.C. SPROUL

Manipulating God's power ends in disaster; Jesus is Savior, not force.

C.H. SPURGEON

The gospel finds a city's particular sin and exposes it.

MATTHEW HENRY

True repentance cuts off the occasions of sin — burn the books.

ἐξορκιστής
EXORKISTĒS · "EXORCIST"

One who drives out spirits by an oath or spell; its only New Testament use is verse 13.

Great Is Artemis of the Ephesians!

Paul plans for Rome while Demetrius rallies the silversmiths and fills the theater

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.

DAVID GUZIK

The great temple, the shrine trade, two hours of shouting.

R.C. SPROUL

We are predisposed to idolatry; every people has its idols.

C.H. SPURGEON

The riot proved the growth: God works with men that work.

MATTHEW HENRY

Men are jealous for what makes them money; noise is no argument.

ναοὺς ἀργυροῦς Ἀρτέμιδος
NAOUS … ARTEMIDOS · "SHRINES OF ARTEMIS"

Naos is the word for a temple's inner house where the god was thought to dwell; Demetrius made silver miniatures of it for pilgrims and households (v. 24 — the NASB's only "shrines" for naos).

Two assemblies in Ephesus

TWO ASSEMBLIES IN ONE CITY · BOTH CALLED ἐκκλησία

THE DISCIPLES (vv8–20)	THE THEATER (vv23–41)
gathered by the word of the Lord (v10)	gathered by a silversmith's speech (v25)
reasoning daily, two years (vv9–10)	shouting for about two hours (v34)
"the name of the Lord Jesus" magnified (v17)	"Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" (vv28, 34)
burn their own costly books (v19)	fear for their prosperity (vv25–27)
know whom they have believed (v18)	most "did not know" why they came (v32)
the word keeps growing (v20)	the assembly is dismissed (v41)

Luke calls the mob an ekklēsia in vv32, 39 and 41 — the word the New Testament uses for the church.

Compare the two gatherings line by line: one grows around the word and the name of Jesus, the other shouts for an idol and goes home.

Do Nothing Rash

A town clerk quiets the theater and the law protects the gospel

ACTS 19:36

"So, since these are undeniable facts, you ought to keep calm and to do nothing rash.

DAVID GUZIK

Rational people saw nothing to fear in Christianity.

MATTHEW HENRY

Do nothing rashly; most fear men's judgment more than God's.

νεωκόρος

NEŌKOROS · "GUARDIAN OF THE TEMPLE"

Literally a "temple-sweeper," then the official keeper of a temple — an honorary title Ephesus wore with pride.

What to carry from this chapter

1

The question was about the first blessing, not a second.

“Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?”

2

We are reservoirs, not fountains.

Spurgeon: “we are not fountains but reservoirs, not creators but receivers.”

3

The Spirit’s coming widens like Acts 1:8.

Jews (2:4), Samaritans (8:17), Gentiles (10:44–46), and now John’s disciples in Asia (19:6) — each group receives the same Spirit, with an apostle present.

4

When the door closes, rent a hall.

Hardened hearers drove Paul from the synagogue; daily teaching in a lecture hall reached a whole province in two years (vv9–10).

More to carry

5

God gets the glory for the cloths.

Henry: “He was but the instrument, God was the principal agent.”

6

A borrowed name will not save you.

“I recognize Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?”

7

Secrets lose their power when spoken.

Believers came “confessing and disclosing their practices” (v18).

8

Real repentance burns the books.

Henry: “Those that truly repent of sin will keep themselves as far as possible from the occasions of it.”

Talk it through

1. The twelve men had a real start — repentance — but did not yet know Jesus or His Spirit. Where might my faith be sincere but incomplete?

2. Paul left the synagogue when hearts hardened and found another door. When a door closes in my ministry or my family, do I quit or look for the next hall?

3. The sons of Sceva used Jesus' name without knowing Him. In what ways do I use Christian words or habits as a charm instead of trusting a Person?

4. What are my "magic books" — the things I keep in secret, or keep around "just in case," that I need to confess and burn?

5. Demetrius said, "our prosperity depends upon this business." Where would obeying Jesus cost me money, and what am I doing about it?

CLOSING

Acts 19 shows what happens when the word of the Lord is taught patiently in a dark city: the Spirit comes, the occult is exposed, idols lose customers, and the name of Jesus is magnified. The question the demon asked is still the question: not whether I know about Jesus, but whether I belong to Him — and whether my own books are burned.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

Full Deep Dive, O·I·A study and reflection journal: see the Acts study page.