SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

Acts 19

The Word Grew Mightily in Ephesus — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-10 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

Patient teaching of the word in a dark city brings the Spirit, exposes the occult and empties the idol shops, until the name of the Lord Jesus is magnified. The name is not a charm I borrow but a Lord I belong to, and belonging to Him means burning my own books.

00 The Text

ACTS 19 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

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

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."

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

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."

5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

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

7 There were in all about twelve men.

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

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.

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

11 God was performing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul,

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.

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."

14 Seven sons of one Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this.

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

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.

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.

18 Many also of those who had believed kept coming, confessing and disclosing their practices.

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.

20 So the word of the Lord was growing mightily and prevailing.

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."

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

23 About that time there occurred no small disturbance concerning the Way.

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

25 these he gathered together with the workmen of similar trades, and said, "Men, you know that our prosperity depends upon this business.

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.

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."

28 When they heard this and were filled with rage, they began crying out, saying, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

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.

30 And when Paul wanted to go into the assembly, the disciples would not let him.

31 Also some of the Asiarchs who were friends of his sent to him and repeatedly urged him not to venture into the theater.

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.

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.

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!"

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?

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

37 "For you have brought these men here who are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of our goddess.

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.

39 "But if you want anything beyond this, it shall be settled in the lawful assembly.

40 "For indeed we are in danger of being accused of a riot in connection with today's events, since there is no real cause for it, and in this connection we will be unable to account for this disorderly gathering."

41 After saying this he dismissed the assembly.

Marked in the text

- **v2** “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed” — Promise / blessing
- **v4** “the baptism of repentance” — Time / place / contrast
- **v4** “believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus” — Command / instruction
- **v5** “baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus” — Command / instruction
- **v6** “the Holy Spirit came on them” — God — His character & actions
- **v8** “speaking out boldly for three months” — Time / place / contrast
- **v8** “the kingdom of God” — Promise / blessing
- **v9** “hardened and disobedient” — Sin / warning
- **v9** “reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus” — Time / place / contrast
- **v10** “all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord” — Promise / blessing
- **v11** “God was performing extraordinary miracles” — God — His character & actions
- **v13** “I adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches” — Sin / warning
- **v15** “I recognize Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?” — Sin / warning
- **v17** “the name of the Lord Jesus was being magnified” — God — His character & actions
- **v18** “confessing and disclosing their practices” — Command / instruction
- **v19** “began burning them in the sight of everyone” — Command / instruction
- **v19** “fifty thousand pieces of silver” — Time / place / contrast
- **v20** “the word of the Lord was growing mightily and prevailing” — Promise / blessing
- **v21** “I must also see Rome” — Time / place / contrast
- **v25** “our prosperity depends upon this business” — Sin / warning
- **v26** “gods made with hands are no gods at all” — God — His character & actions
- **v32** “the majority did not know for what reason they had come together” — Sin / warning
- **v36** “you ought to keep calm and to do nothing rash” — Command / instruction
- **v28** “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians” — Sin / warning (every occurrence)
- **v12** “evil spirit” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v32** “assembly” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)

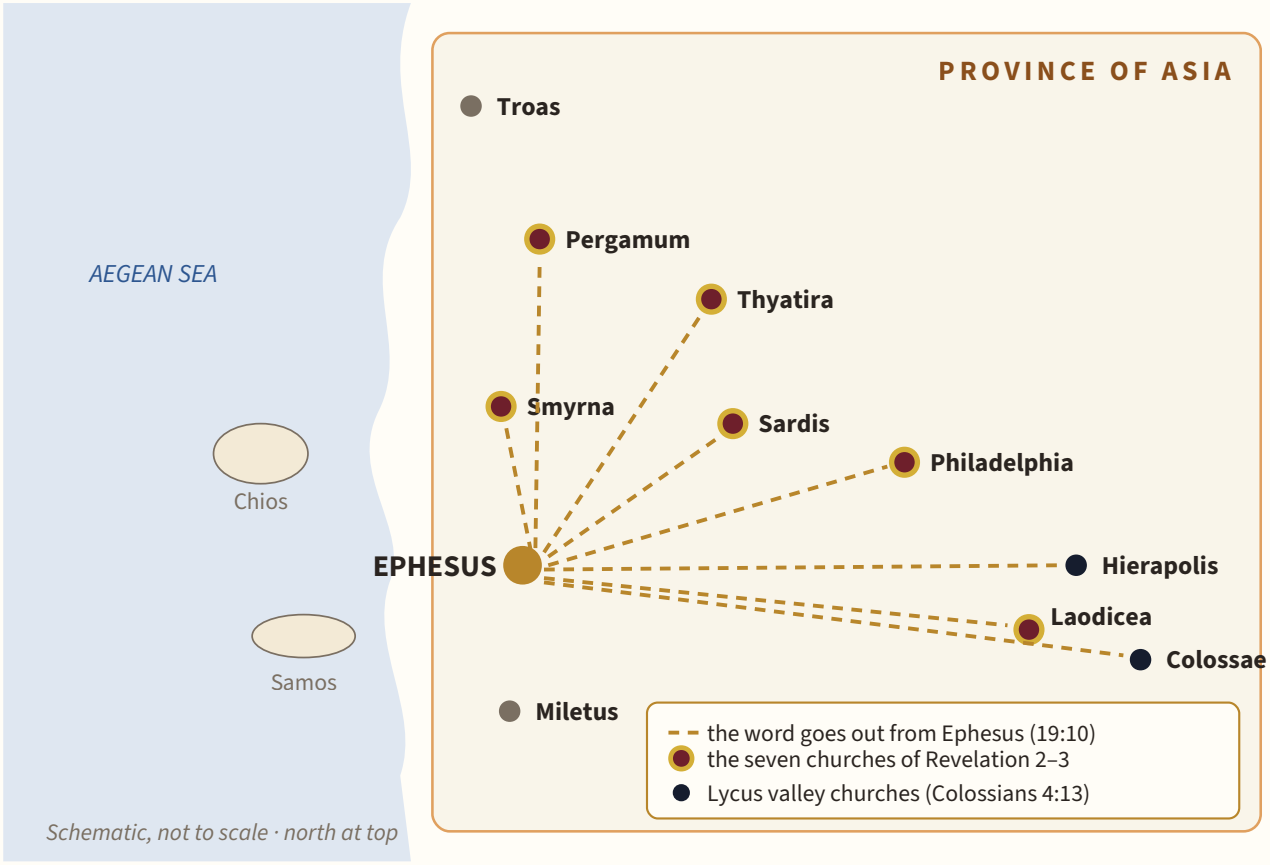
01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · 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."

FIGURE · EPHESUS AND THE PROVINCE OF ASIA



From the hall of Tyrannus "all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord" (19:10); the dashed lines show how the message could reach the cities later addressed in Revelation 2–3 and the Lycus valley.

Setting. While Apollos is in Corinth, Paul comes overland to Ephesus, the chief city of the province of Asia (v1). He spends three months in the synagogue (v8) and two years in the school of Tyrannus (v10). After the bonfire of magic books he plans to go through Macedonia and Achaia to Jerusalem and then Rome (v21), and sends Timothy and Erastus ahead (v22). The chapter ends in the city's theater, with a riot over Artemis and a town clerk who sends everyone home (vv23–41).

Structure:

- vv1–7 — **John's disciples:** "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" (v2); "Into John's baptism" (v3); John pointed to Jesus (v4); baptized in Jesus' name, hands laid on them, the Spirit comes — tongues and prophesying (vv5–6); about twelve men (v7).
- vv8–12 — **the hall of Tyrannus:** three months in the synagogue, the kingdom of God (v8); some harden and speak evil of the Way; Paul withdraws to the school of Tyrannus (v9); two years — all Asia hears (v10); extraordinary miracles, handkerchiefs and aprons (vv11–12).
- vv13–20 — **the name and the books:** Jewish exorcists try the name of Jesus (v13); the seven sons of Sceva (v14); "I recognize Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?" (v15); beaten and fleeing naked (v16); fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus magnified (v17); believers confess (v18); magic books burned — fifty thousand pieces of silver (v19); the word grows and prevails (v20).
- vv21–34 — **the riot:** Paul purposes in the Spirit to go to Jerusalem and Rome (vv21–22); "no small disturbance concerning the Way" (v23); Demetrius and the silversmiths (vv24–27); "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" (v28); the theater, Gaius and Aristarchus seized; Paul held back by the disciples and the Asiarchs (vv29–31); confusion (v32); Alexander shouted down; two hours of chanting (vv33–34).
- vv35–41 — **the town clerk:** the city is guardian of the temple and the image from heaven (v35); keep calm (v36); these men are not temple robbers (v37); use the courts (vv38–39); the danger of being charged with a riot (v40); he dismisses the assembly (v41).

Repeated words, with counts:

- "Paul" ×10 — vv1, 4, 6, 11, 13, 15, 21, 26, 29, 30.
- "Lord" ×5 — vv5, 10, 13, 17, 20 — always the Lord Jesus or "the word of the Lord."
- "Ephesus / Ephesians" ×7 — vv1, 17, 26, 28, 34, 35 (×2).
- "Jesus" ×6 — vv4, 5, 13 (×2), 15, 17.
- "baptized / baptism" ×5 — vv3 (×2), 4 (×2), 5.
- "Artemis" ×5 — vv24, 27, 28, 34, 35; "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" ×2 — vv28, 34.
- "assembly" ×5 — vv30, 32, 33, 39, 41.
- "know / knows / known / recognize" ×6 — vv15 (×2), 17, 25, 32, 35.
- "name" ×4 — vv5, 13 (×2), 17; "evil spirit(s)" ×4 — vv12, 13, 15, 16.
- "Asia" ×4 — vv10, 22, 26, 27; "Jews" ×4 — vv10, 17, 33, 34.
- "gods / goddess" ×4 — vv26 (×2), 27, 37; "business / trade / prosperity" ×4 — vv24, 25 (×2), 27.
- "reasoning / persuading / persuaded" ×4 — vv8 (×2), 9, 26.
- "Holy Spirit" ×3 — vv2 (×2), 6; plus "in the Spirit" (v21).
- "the Way" ×2 — vv9, 23; "the word of the Lord" ×2 — vv10, 20; "theater" ×2 — vv29, 31; "confusion" ×2 — vv29, 32.

Contrasts: John's baptism of repentance ⟷ baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus (vv3–5). The synagogue ⟷ the school of Tyrannus (vv8–9). Paul's hands ⟷ the exorcists' borrowed formula (vv11–13). "Jesus I know, and Paul I know" ⟷ "but who are you?" (v15). Hidden practices ⟷ confessed and burned in the sight of everyone (vv18–19). The word that grows and prevails (v20) ⟷ the shout that lasts two hours and changes nothing (v34). Gods made with hands ⟷ the living God (v26). The disciples' gathering ⟷ the theater's "assembly" that did not know why it had come together (v32).

Shape of the chapter: two halves. In vv1–20 the word goes on the offensive — twelve men, a lecture hall, a province, the occult broken — and ends in a summary: "the word of the Lord was growing mightily and prevailing." In vv21–41 the world pushes back — trade, temple and mob — and God quiets it through a pagan official. The hinge is v21: Paul looks past Ephesus to Jerusalem and Rome.

Chapter theme (my words): The name of the Lord Jesus is not a spell; it is a Person who sends His Spirit, breaks the grip of darkness and empties the idol shops. When the word is taught patiently, sins come into the light, costly things get burned, and a whole region hears.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · ACTS 19:15

"And the evil spirit answered and said to them,

"⚠ I recognize Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?""

FIGURE · 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.

Who were the "disciples" of verse 1? They knew John's baptism of repentance but had not heard that the Spirit had been given (v2). Guzik: "Paul points out that John's baptism was one of repentance, not necessarily faith unto salvation" — he sees a partial faith not yet resting on Jesus. Henry treats them as untaught disciples to be instructed patiently. Either way, Paul did what Priscilla and Aquila had done for Apollos (18:26): he explained the way of God more accurately and pointed them to Jesus.

Is this a "second blessing" after salvation? Pentecostal and charismatic friends often read v2 (especially the KJV "since ye believed") as a second experience after conversion. The NASB's "when you believed" and Paul's follow-up question (v3) point the other way: these men had not yet believed in Jesus at all, only in the One John said was coming. When they believed and were baptized in His name, the Spirit came. Spurgeon applies the question to believers in a different sense — not a second experience, but continual receiving: "we are not fountains but reservoirs, not creators but receivers." I hold that every believer receives the Spirit at faith (Ephesians 1:13), and every believer needs to keep being filled (Ephesians 5:18).

Why tongues here? Luke shows the Spirit's coming at each new frontier of Acts 1:8 — Jews (2:4), Samaritans (8:17), Gentiles (10:46), and here a group still tied to John — with an apostle present to witness it. Guzik says simply that "they were filled with the Holy Spirit, and received His gifts." Teachers differ on whether tongues continue today; this text does not settle that question, and it does not make tongues the test of every believer.

Why handkerchiefs and aprons? Luke calls these "extraordinary" miracles (v11) — not the normal pattern. Guzik (with Bruce) thinks they were Paul's work rags, and says "God will stoop down to meet us even in our crude superstitions." Henry insists "It was not Paul that wrought them." This is not a model for selling prayer cloths; it is God confirming His word in a city soaked in magic.

What went wrong with the sons of Sceva? They had the right name and no relationship. Guzik: "The Jewish exorcists failed because they had no personal relationship with Jesus." Sproul's sermon (as Ligonier summarizes it): "attempting to manipulate the power of God will be met with disastrous consequences." The demon knew Jesus and knew Paul. The question "but who are you?" is the one every religious man must answer.

Why burn the books instead of selling them? Selling them would have passed the poison on and kept the profit. Henry: "Those that truly repent of sin will keep themselves as far as possible from the occasions of it." Guzik: the spells' power "was in their secrecy, which was renounced in the telling." Spurgeon: the gospel "finds out the particular sin of that place, and it is quite sure to expose it."

What drove the riot? Money first, religion second. Demetrius says it plainly: "our prosperity depends upon this business" (v25), and only then mentions the goddess (v27). Henry: "It is natural for men to be jealous for that, whether right or wrong, by which they get their wealth." Sproul's sermon starts further down: "As fallen sinners, we are predisposed to idolatry." Every culture has its Artemis, and every Artemis has a trade around it.

Why does Luke tell us about the town clerk? To show that the gospel broke no law. Guzik: "Luke wanted to show that rational people saw nothing to fear or oppose in Christianity." The theater "assembly" (*ekklēsia*) was confused; the church is the assembly that knows why it has come together.

Word study (Greek):

- **receive / believed — *lambanō* (G2983) / *pisteuō* (G4100):** "did you receive … when you believed" (v2).
- **repentance — *metanoia* (G3341):** John's baptism of repentance (v4; compare 20:21).
- **hardened — *sklērynō* (G4645):** an ongoing hardening that turns to slander (v9).
- **the Way — *hodos* (G3598):** the church's name for the faith (vv9, 23).
- **school — *scholē* (G4981):** a lecture hall; its only New Testament use (v9).
- **handkerchiefs — *soudarion* (G4676) / aprons — *simikinthion* (G4612):** sweat-cloths and work aprons (v12).
- **exorcists — *exorkistēs* (G1845) / adjure — *horkizō* (G3726):** binding spirits by oath (v13).
- **confessing — *exomologeō* (G1843):** to acknowledge openly (v18).
- **magic — *periergos* (G4021):** "curious arts" (KJV); "busybodies" in 1 Tim 5:13.
- **growing / prevailing — *auxanō* (G837) / *ischyō* (G2480):** the word keeps growing and winning (v20; compare v16).
- **shrines — *naos* (G3485) / Artemis (G735):** silver models of the goddess's temple (v24).
- **assembly — *ekklēsia* (G1577):** used of the theater crowd (vv32, 39, 41).
- **temple guardian — *neōkoros* (G3511):** Ephesus's proud title (v35).
- **town clerk — *grammateus* (G1122):** the city's chief officer (v35).

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. **The question was about the first blessing, not a second** (vv2–3).
2. **We are reservoirs, not fountains** (Spurgeon).
3. **The Spirit's coming widens like Acts 1:8** — Jews, Samaritans, Gentiles, John's disciples.
4. **When the door closes, rent a hall** (vv9–10).
5. **God gets the glory for the cloths** (Henry, Guzik).
6. **A borrowed name will not save you** — "but who are you?" (v15).
7. **Secrets lose their power when spoken** (v18).
8. **Real repentance burns the books** (v19).
9. **The word grows like a living thing** — growing and prevailing (v20).
10. **The gospel touches the economy** (v25).

Cross-references: Exod 20:3–4; Deut 18:10–12; Isa 40:18–20; Matt 6:24; Acts 1:5, 8; 2:4; 8:14–20; 10:44–46; 18:19–28; 20:21, 31; 1 Cor 8:4–6; 16:8–9; 2 Cor 1:8–9; Eph 1:13–14; 5:11, 18; 1 Tim 1:3; 1 John 5:21; Rev 2:4.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · ACTS 19:18

"Many also of those who had believed kept coming,
confessing and disclosing their practices."

FIGURE · 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.

Example to follow — Paul in the hall of Tyrannus. When some hardened and spoke evil of the Way, Paul didn't argue forever and didn't quit. He moved next door and taught every day for two years. Most of the good I have seen in the men I serve came the same way — not from one big moment, but from showing up week after week with the Book open. I will keep my table going this week, even if only two show up.

Sin to confess — borrowing a name I don't live under. The sons of Sceva knew the right words: "by Jesus whom Paul preaches." I can talk like a Christian, pray like a Christian and teach like a Christian while trying to use God instead of obey Him. Sproul's warning lands on me: "Jesus is not a force to be controlled but a Savior whom we must receive and to whom we must submit." I confess the places where I have used His name to get my way.

Command to obey — confess and burn. The new believers came "confessing and disclosing their practices" and burned their books "in the sight of everyone." For the men I walk with — and for me — the "books" might be a phone number, an app, a stash, a hidden account, a set of old letters. Secret things keep their power in secret. This week I will bring one hidden thing into the light with a brother I trust, and get rid of it, even if it costs me.

Truth to face — my Demetrius. “Our prosperity depends upon this business.” There is always a trade built around an idol, and sometimes I am in it. If following Jesus would cost me money, comfort or reputation, I need to know which god I really serve (Matthew 6:24).

Promise to trust — the word prevails. “So the word of the Lord was growing mightily and prevailing.” Not my cleverness, not my program. The same word that broke the magic of Ephesus can break the chains in a cell block, a halfway house or my own living room.

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

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? (19:1–7; 18:24–26) *Into what then were you baptized?*
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? (19:8–10; 1 Cor 16:8–9) *A wide door … and many adversaries.*
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? (19:13–17) *Jesus is not a force to be controlled (Sproul).*
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? (19:18–19; Deut 18:10–12) *True repentance cuts off the occasions of sin (Henry).*
5. Demetrius said, “our prosperity depends upon this business.” Where would obeying Jesus cost me money, and what am I doing about it? (19:24–27; Matt 6:24) *Men are jealous for what gives them their wealth (Henry).*
6. The crowd shouted for two hours and most did not know why they had come. What crowd or cause do I get swept into without thinking? (19:28–34) *Noise and clamour and popular fury (Henry).*

Worship. The Lord Jesus sends His Spirit to men who had not even heard there was a Holy Spirit. His name is magnified in a city of magic; demons know Him; idols fall before Him without a sermon against them. His word grows like a living thing and prevails, and He guards His servants even through a pagan clerk.

Prayer. Lord Jesus, I don’t want to know about You the way the sons of Sceva did; I want to belong to You. Fill me with Your Spirit again today — I am a reservoir, not a fountain. Show me my magic books, and give me the courage to confess them and burn them in the light. Break the hold of whatever Artemis I have been shouting for. Let Your word grow mightily and prevail in me, in my home, and in the men You have given me. Amen.

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