

ACTS CH 19 – PAUL IN EPHEBUS

During this period Paul writes 1 & 2 Corinthians and Romans

Ephesus

- One of the largest and most impressive cities and seaports in the ancient world, a political, religious, and commercial center in Asia Minor.
- At the time of Paul, Ephesus was probably the fourth largest city in the world, with a population estimated at 250,000.
- It was home to the Artemesion, the temple of Artemis, one of the seven ancient wonders of the world – and centered around the worship of Artemis (Roman: Diana).
- Artemis was the Greek goddess of the moon, the daughter of Zeus and Leto. Artemis was the goddess who watched over nature for both humans and animals. She was the patron deity of wild animals. She was considered the great mother image and gave fertility to humankind.
- On a side note, there was an annual festival on May 25, when numerous statues of the goddess were carried in procession to the amphitheater in Ephesus for a celebration of music, dancing, and drama.

19:1-7 – Baptism of John

- “Asia” refers not to the continent but to the Roman province which is now modern day Turkey.

19:8-20

- V11-12 – Items carrying imbued power. These were likely his work rags to catch sweat and work aprons. Note that Paul is not condoning this, and in all likelihood these items were being taken without his knowledge or permission. Yet God still works through this to draw them to his message. “The healing power was not contained in the device itself, but came only from God.” 2 Kings 13:21; Mark 5:25-30; Acts 5:15
- V13-17 – Jewish exorcists. “Magical exorcists often invoked the names of higher spirits to cast out lower ones.

- According to magical theory, exorcists could coerce a deity of spirit to do their will by invoking its name.
- The clear problem with this is that Jesus is not some name to be invoked or controlled, he is the name above all names, king of kings, Lord of Lord, the Alpha and the Omega, the great I Am.
- What the Bible says about superstitions: 1 Timothy 4:1-6; 2 Timothy 3:1-7; Matthew 7:22-23
- V18-20 – people burn their spells and books. People now recognize that this Jesus that Paul is preaching isn’t just another spirit or lower god, but is the greatest God, in whom true power and authority rests.
- Magic in the Bible refers to any practice that includes: healing, fertility, mediumistic divination, divinatory wordplay, material divination. Modern “magic” would be categorized as: séances, necromancy, and all forms of communicating with the dead, PSI, ESP, and all forms of supra-natural psychic phenomena, fortune telling (tarot cards, palm reading), the casting of spells, wearing of charms, the use of ouija boards, astrology, horoscopes, etc. As a Christian you are to have NO part of it.
- The equivalent of about 50,000 days’ OR 136 years’ worth of wages for an average worker

19:21-41 – Riot in Ephesus

- “The temple of Artemis served as a bank as well as a temple. People from all over the world deposited funds there. In Ephesus, politics and religion were as heavily intertwined as religion and economics, and local civic pride was inseparable from the worship of the Ephesian Artemis.”
- Amazingly, we see that again God protects Paul, using someone from the town itself with authority to dismiss the crowds and allow the continuation of the gospel without hindrance or harm to Paul and the church.