

Acts of the Apostles – 19

I. The Inspired History

- A. Paul Rebaptizes Apollos's Converts at Ephesus (1-7).
 - 1. He exposes their obsolete baptism unto repentance (1-3).
 - 2. He explains the change in baptism and baptizes them (4-5).
 - 3. He lays hands on them to receive the Holy Ghost (6-7).
- B. Paul Evangelizes Asia from Ephesus (8-12).
 - 1. He works for three months in the synagogue (8).
 - 2. He teaches in a school for two years (9-10).
 - 3. He was blessed with special miracles (11-12).
- C. Imposters Prove Paul's Apostolic Authority (13-20).
 - 1. Some Jewish gypsies attempt an exorcism (13-17).
 - 2. The resulting spiritual fear brought further revival (18-20).
- D. The Lord Ends a Riot Caused by Demetrius (21-41).
 - 1. Paul prepares to leave Ephesus for Macedonia (21-22).
 - 2. Demetrius the silversmith incites a riot (23-28).
 - 3. The whole city engages in a confused assembly (29-34).
 - 4. The townclerk turns the proceedings into nothing (35-41).

II. The Sense and Meaning

- A. Paul meets disciples at Ephesus, whom had obsolete baptisms, likely from Apollos (1-3).
 - 1. A complete and detailed analysis of this section is in an outline entitled "Rebaptism."
 - 2. Apollos, an aggressive and accomplished teacher, had been evangelizing at Ephesus.
 - a. He knew only John's baptism (18:25), so converts were baptized unto John.
 - b. Aquila and Priscilla had converted him further before sending him to Corinth.
 - 3. Paul then arrives in Ephesus after confirming churches in Galatia and Phrygia (18:23).
 - 4. These certain men were twelve in number (7), and they were believing disciples (1-2).
 - a. By contextual location, we believe these disciples were converts of Apollos.
 - b. Apollos knew the way of the Lord Jesus and taught Him diligently, but he was ignorant concerning baptism, Pentecost, and the Holy Ghost.
 - c. It is highly probably that Aquila and Priscilla told Paul of these alien baptisms.
 - 5. Paul, by way of two probing questions, determines a faulty baptism for their condition.
 - a. They lacked the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit necessary at that time.
 - b. And they further explain they knew nothing of Paul's gifts of the Holy Ghost.
 - c. The Holy Ghost came by proper baptism (2:38), so Paul asks of their baptism.
 - d. They further explain they had been baptized unto John's baptism, which was not a baptism by John, but rather an unauthorized baptism copying John.
- B. Paul explains that John's baptism was anticipatory of Jesus Christ by "that is" (4-5).
 - 1. The baptism of repentance was prior to Pentecost, since then it is baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, Whom God has exalted as both Lord and Christ (2:33-40).
 - 2. They gladly received proper post-Pentecost baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus (5).
 - 3. There are two parties speaking and hearing, baptizing and being baptized, not three.
 - 4. Infant sprinkling heretics, who despise Baptists of any name, deny any rebaptism here by making the words of verse five Paul's further description of John's hearers.

- C. Paul then laid apostolic hands on them, and they received the Spirit and His gifts (6-7).
 - 1. Sometimes these gifts came by God's timing and act (2:1-4); sometimes by apostolic laying on of hands after baptism (8:14-19); and sometimes before baptism (10:44-48).
 - 2. In these days, spiritual gifts were needed for edification (I Cor 12:28-31; 13:8-13).
- D. Paul entered the synagogue in Ephesus and spends three months teaching the gospel (8).
 - 1. Paul's constant pattern is instructive (13:14,42; 14:1; 17:1-3,10,17; 18:4,19; 19:8).
 - a. Why does the mightiest evangelist go to the synagogues rather than the bars?
 - b. If men have no interest in truth, there is no Bible basis for confronting them.
 - c. Unreasonable and wicked men are to be avoided (II Thess 3:1-2; Matt 7:6).
 - 2. Proper teaching includes disputing and persuading; it is not an entertaining art form.
 - a. **Dispute**. Contend by opposing arguments, assertions. Debate argumentatively.
 - b. **Persuade**. To induce belief of (a fact, statement, opinion, etc.); to lead one to think or believe; to prove, demonstrate.
 - c. He contended (9:20-22; 13:43; 17:1-3,17; 18:4,19; 19:8-9,26; 24:25; 28:23).
 - d. It is war against your thoughts (II Cor 10:1-6; Tit 2:11-15; II Timothy 4:1-5).
 - e. Even saints are to earnestly contend for the faith once delivered (Jude 1:3).
 - f. Nehemiah gives a holy example of contending for the truth (Neh 13:11,17,25).
 - g. Rather than constant encouragement, agreement, and positive messages, true preaching has a lot of criticism, correction, and instruction to new conduct.
 - 3. The things concerning the kingdom of God and the gospel are the same (28:23-31).
 - a. There are glad tidings of Jesus as Lord and Christ (Acts 2:14-40; 13:16-41).
 - b. There are duties to repent and obey the Lord Jesus (Ac 14:15-16; I Thes 4:1-8).
 - c. There is the hope of future glory (I Cor 15:19; I Thess 1:9-10; I Peter 1:3-9).
- E. Paul separated the disciples from the unbelievers and took up teaching in a school (9-10).
 - 1. When he realized it was no longer efficient and profitable in the synagogue, he left.
 - 2. Observe that the gospel has a hardening affect on those not ordained to eternal life.
 - 3. Rather than praying more, he left them to be efficient with believers (II Thess 3:1-2).
 - 4. We know what he taught, for Paul cared only for Jesus Christ and Him crucified.
 - 5. Paul continued this daily teaching in the school for two years, converting many.
 - 6. When we read about Asia here, it was the Roman Asia Minor, part of modern Turkey.
- F. God gave Paul extraordinary gifts of the Spirit to do special confirming miracles (11-12).
 - 1. In an idolatrous city given to devil worship, Jesus sent Paul into hell (Matt 16:18).
 - 2. It is precious to read that there are miracles and there are special miracles. Amen!
 - 3. Diseases and evil spirits were routed by the mere presence of a hankie from Paul.
- G. Seven Jewish gypsies, the son of a priest named Sceva, attempt to duplicate Paul (13-17).
 - 1. A vagabond is a wanderer roaming about without a home or occupation – a gypsy.
 - 2. These gypsies earned a living pretending exorcisms by their religion (Matt 12:22-30).
 - 3. Paul's incredible authority over spirits was observed, and duplication was attempted.
 - 4. The evil spirits always knew Jesus, and they had learned about Paul; but that is all.
 - 5. It is needful for us to realize two things: (a) evil spirits and (b) power in Jesus' name.
 - 6. Demonstration of such spiritual presence and power magnified the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - 7. Miraculous sign gifts are no longer necessary or present, so we pray spiritually.

- H. Fear resulting from this published event brought further revival in the city of Ephesus (18-20).
 - 1. Through the gates of hell went the gospel of Christ, converting many of the people.
 - 2. “Curious” here is the desire to learn or know things to which one has no right to know.
 - 3. Curious “arts” are those techniques of magic and sorcery used to solicit spirit help.
 - 4. They did not sell these books and turn the money over to the apostles (Deut 23:18).
 - 5. This great sum of money indicates true conversion - repentance proven by repudiation and loss (Job 33:27-28; Matthew 3:7-9; 5:29-30; Luke 19:1-9; II Corinthians 7:10-11).
 - 6. Following Christ truly will bring loss (Luke 14:26-27) and persecution (II Tim 3:12).
 - 7. “So,” in this way, by true repentance, the Word of God grew mightily and prevailed.
- I. Paul, having built a church in Ephesus, prepares to leave for Macedonia and Achaia (21-22).
 - 1. Paul’s purposes and plans were subject to the Spirit, as should our plans (James 4:15).
 - 2. He intends to visit the churches he had started there, and he had thoughts of Rome.
 - 3. He sent Timotheus and Erastus ahead to Macedonia, while he stayed in Ephesus.
- J. Demetrius, the silversmith, initiates a riot in Ephesus against Paul and the gospel (23-28).
 - 1. Luke and the Holy Spirit here call an inflamed riot of fools “no small stir.”
 - 2. What is “that way”? It is the way of Christ and His gospel (9:2; 19:9; 22:4; 24:14,22).
 - 3. God reveals this opposition, like so many compromises in religion, is based on the desire for financial gain (Exodus 18:21; 23:8; Num 16:15; Deut 16:18-19; I Samuel 8:1-3; 12:1-5; Prov 17:23; Eccl 7:7; Isaiah 56:11; Matthew 6:19-24; Luke 16:3; Acts 20:33-35; I Tim 3:3,8; 6:6-10; Titus 1:7,11; I Pet 5:2; II Pet 2:15; Jude 1:11).
 - 4. Note that Paul’s preaching was not all positive; he had persuaded many against idols.
 - 5. So if you cannot overthrow truth by reason, then just cry out for Diana, your fantasy.
- K. The whole city was filled with confusion by this riot and assembly supporting Diana (29-34).
 - 1. Satan was at work confusing the minds of these people, who knew not their purpose.
 - 2. We do not know this Alexander for certain, though we may presume Alexander the coppersmith with some safety (II Tim 4:14); we know the Jews wished for him to speak to divert the tumult from them (who also opposed idolatry) to the Christians.
 - 3. How glorious is a religion based on superstitious chanting about an idol of stone!
- L. The townclerk, by the Providence of God, turns the confused assembly into nothing (35-41).
 - 1. Isn’t it wonderful to be ignorant? Simply presume Diana to be irrefutable! God forbid! We must rather prove all things and search all things (I Thess 5:21; Acts 17:11).
 - 2. God uses the ignorance or sensibilities of this noble townclerk to free his servants.
 - 3. He warns the citizens that Rome will want to know the purpose for their public tumult.