

Woodland Baptist Church

December 5, 2012 - Wednesday Night in the Word

Acts 19:1-10 The Disciples of John...The Hall of Tyrannus

1) OPENING REMARKS

- a) Luke's account of Paul's third missionary journey is essentially a record of Paul's ministry in Ephesus, the city he probably tried to reach at the beginning of his second journey (cf. 16:6). [Constable]
- b) This scene recounts Paul's final missionary swing through the Greco-Roman world. [Bock]
- c) We have in affect 4 scenes [Bock]:
 - i) vs. 1-7, Paul with the disciples of the Baptist
 - ii) vs. 8-20, Paul's ministry and confrontation with the Jewish exorcists
 - iii) vs. 21-22, Paul's travel plans
 - iv) vs. 23-41, the demonstration by the Ephesians on behalf of Artemis [riot]

2) SIGNIFICANT SCRIPTURES

- a) **1 Corinthians 15:32** - 32 What do I gain if, humanly speaking, **I fought with beasts at Ephesus?** If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."
- b) **1 Corinthians 16:8-9** - 8 But I will stay **in Ephesus until Pentecost**, 9 for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.

3) READ ACTS 19:1-10

- a) Paul keeps his promise made in 18:21 to return to Ephesus "if God wills."
- b) Judging from Colossians 1:7, the churches were established by Paul's coworker Epaphras, probably during the course of Paul's Ephesian ministry. [Polhill]

4) Verses 22-23 Paul fulfills a promise to return

- a) **And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus.**

i) The city of EPHESUS [theater shown below, Logos]



- (1) Pagan Worship - Temple of Artemis - Its religious influence continued to draw worshippers to the Temple of Artemis (Greek) or Diana (Roman). This magnificent temple was four times the size of the Parthenon at Athens and was renowned as one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Alexander the Great had contributed much money for its construction in the fourth century B.C., and it lasted until A.D. 263 when the Goths destroyed it.
- (2) "Ephesus, for all her past splendor, was a dying city, pre-occupied with parasite pursuits, living, like Athens, on a reputation, and a curious meeting-place of old and new religions, of superstition and philosophy, of East and West." [constable]
- (3) Out of Ephesus came a ministry that impacted the entire Lycus Valley, planting churches that received the letters later recorded in Rev 2-3. Workers such as Epaphras were key in this expanding church work [Col 1:7, 2:1, 4:12-13; 1 Cor 16:19], [Bock]

5) Verses 2-4 Baptism by the SPIRIT is mandatory for SALVATION

a) **There he found some disciples. 2 And he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." 3 And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" They said, "Into John's baptism." 4 And Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus."**

i) *Found some disciples* - These were most likely disciples that had made the same error as Apollos; so they were disciples of John the Baptist, not Christ's at this point.

b) **2 And he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." 3 And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" They said, "Into John's baptism." 4 And Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus."**

i) There must have been something that Paul heard or saw in these "disciples" that makes Paul question them concerning their faith.

(1) First Question: **"Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"**

(a) We know that the Baptism/indwelling of the Spirit is the true mark of the Christian. We are not Christians until the Holy Spirit convicts us, gives us new birth in Christ and seals us. Anyone that claims to be a Christian must have the Holy Spirit.

(i) **Ephesians 1:13** - In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,

(ii) **Ephesians 4:30** -And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

1. Interesting that these teaching on the Spirit are so pronounced in Paul's letters to Ephesians - he begins and ends the letter speaking of being "sealed" with the Holy Spirit.

(2) First Answer: **"No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."**

- (a) They could not have meant the existence of the actual Spirit; they had to have meant that they had not heard that Pentecost had happened and that the incarnation, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ was the fulfillment of John's message.
- (b) Perhaps there was some confusion on the part of some about what had transpired?
 - (i) **John 11:2-6** - Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples 3 and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" 4 And Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: 5 the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. 6 And blessed is the one who is not offended by me."

(3) Second Question: **"Into what then were you baptized?"**

- (a) There were obviously appeals for those in the "disciples'" midst to be baptized for repentance. Paul was hearing them speak of baptism, but it was not in Christ's name and there was obviously no mention of the Spirit.

(4) Second Answer: **"Into John's baptism."**

- (a) This answer would have made things much more clear to Paul so he now knew what he was dealing with. It does seem that these "disciples'" doctrine was deficient much like Apollos' had been. Perhaps they believed the exact same thing, as it is very interesting and telling that Luke placed them just a few verses from one another.
- (b) "They were still living in the Old Testament which culminated with John the Baptist." [Stott]

(5) Paul's correction: **"John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus."**

- (a) As Aquila and Priscilla corrected Apollos' deficiencies in the gospel, Paul quickly corrects these disciples' erroneous understanding of the what they understood as John's baptism.

6) Verses 5-7 The **CONVICTION** of the Spirit will be **EVIDENT**

i) **John 3:6-8** - That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' 8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

b) **5 On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying. 7 There were about twelve men in all.**

i) As with the new converts in Samaria, these Ephesian disciples received the Holy Spirit when an apostle, this time Paul, laid his hands on them (cf. 8:17). They did not receive the Spirit by water baptism.

(1) In Samaria, this identification of the coming of the Spirit with Peter and John first authenticated God's giving of the Spirit in a non-Jewish context.

(2) Here the identification of the coming of the Spirit with Paul authenticated God's giving of the Spirit in a town in which demonic religious activity flourished (cf. vv. 13-19).

(3) As subsequent events would show, the Jesus whom Paul preached was the more powerful deity. These former disciples of John received the Holy Spirit when Paul laid his hands on them thus obviously connecting their endowment with Paul's message and apostolic authority. There was no delay in the Spirit coming on Cornelius when he believed, and Peter did not have to lay his hands on him to impart the Spirit (10:44). [See Chart]

ii) "It should be noted that the reception of the Holy Spirit [by Christians] in Acts does not follow any set pattern. He came into believers before baptism (Acts 10:44), at the time of or after baptism (8:12-16; 19:6), and by the laying on of apostolic hands (8:17; 19:6). Yet Paul declared (Rom. 8:9) that anyone without the Holy Spirit is not a Christian. Quite obviously the transitional Book of Acts is not to be used as a doctrinal source on how to receive the Holy Spirit (cf. comments on tongues, 1 Cor. 13:8—14:25)." [TC]

iii) "The laying on of apostolic hands, however, together with tongue-speaking and prophesying, were special to Ephesus, as to Samaria, in order to demonstrate visibly and publicly that particular groups were incorporated

into Christ by the Spirit; the New Testament does not universalize them.” [Stott]

- iv) “They experienced a mini-Pentecost. Better, Pentecost caught up to them. Better still, they were caught up into it, as its promised blessings became theirs.” [Stott]

(1) This is the only explicit reference to re-baptism in the New Testament. [TC]

(2) This is the last reference to speaking in tongues in Acts. [Chart on Tongues]

7) Verses 8-10 There will always be REJECTION and ACCEPTANCE

- a) **8 And he entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God. 9 But when some became stubborn and continued in unbelief, speaking evil of the Way before the congregation, he withdrew from them and took the disciples with him, reasoning daily in the hall of Tyrannus. 10 This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.**

- i) *For three months spoke boldly* - Here the Jews were more tolerant than they had been in some other towns that Paul had evangelized, and he was able to continue speaking there for three months. [TC]

- ii) *But when some became stubborn and continued in unbelief, speaking evil of the Way before the congregation, he withdrew from them and took the disciples with him, reasoning daily in the hall of Tyrannus.*

(1) The verb “stubborn” means to “be hardened” to something; it speaks of stubbornness when it comes to emotions; the expression appears in the OT regarding Pharaoh [Exodus 8:15; 9:35] and of the people the wilderness [Deut. 2:30]. [Bock]

(2) The threefold response of hardening, unbelief and speaking evil indicates complete rejection of Paul’s message. [Bock]

- iii) **Hall of Tyrannus** - In Corinth, Titius Justus had provided a home for Paul to operate from when Jewish resistance erupted; in Ephesus it was a school hall owned or operated by Tyrannus. The Western text (Codex Beza) adds that the class were held between the hours of 11am and 4pm, which would normally be “siesta time” when people rested before resuming work after the heat of the day had subsided. [TC]

- iv) **Paul didn't "shake the dust"** - That Paul made no definitive statement to the Ephesian synagogue about turning exclusively to the Gentiles is noteworthy, but they were very divided over who Christ was and no doubt some of these Asian Jews would be the ones to provoke mob action against Paul in Jerusalem 21:27.

8) Closing Thoughts

- a) Significance of Ephesus - Many students of Acts do not adequately appreciate the significance of Ephesus as a center for the spread of the gospel. One must carefully note the clues in Acts and the epistles as well as later church history to understand what took place during the years Paul lived there. God had opened a wide door of opportunity for Paul, but there were many adversaries (1 Cor. 16:8-9). Timothy and later the Apostle John followed Paul in ministry there. The Christians at Ephesus became the original recipients of at least three New Testament books (Ephesians, 1 and 2 Timothy) and possible as many as seven (1, 2, and 3 John, and Revelation). [TC]
- b) "From this it is sometimes argued that Christian initiation is in two stages, beginning with faith and conversion, and followed later by receiving the Holy Spirit, but those twelve disciples cannot possibly be regarded as providing a norm for two-stage initiation." [Stott]
- c) Thoughts from Darrell Bock:
 - i) the success of Paul's work in Ephesus in the context of Artemis worship portrays the superiority of Christianity over cultic worship.
 - ii) Christianity is not a threat to Roman order.
 - iii) Paul has friends in high social places that are not Christians.
 - iv) Christianity's superiority to paganism leads to opposition to Paul that is weak and confused.