

THE BOOK OF ACTS | GOD'S REVELATION OF TRANSITION

SESSION 61 ACTS 19:8-14

ACTS 19:1-12 | THE THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY: EPHESUS, PART 2

- Verses 1-7 – *see session 60*
- Verse 8 –
 - Earlier Paul had been in this synagogue, and they desired him to stay longer, but he was unable (Acts 18:19-20). Now he is able to stay for **three months** before circumstances cause him to leave the synagogue.
 - For Paul, it was always “to the Jew first,” and the first message to the Jew was always **concerning the kingdom of God**.
 - If you use this pattern today, you will, by necessity, be teaching the wrong message because the kingdom is not an “on the table” offer.
- Verse 9 –
 - As is always the case for any new message, some accept and some reject. Unfortunately, those who were **hardened and believed not** did not *persuade* (as Paul had done, v. 8), but rather **spoke evil of that way**. Their philosophy was “if you don’t have an argument, just yell.” Discerning believers should train themselves to be persuaded by argumentation rather than attack.
 - Paul graciously **departed from them** but not without gathering those whom he had persuaded and moving the disciples to **the school of one Tyrannus** which would serve as the home base where he could carry on the work of **disputing daily**.
 - An interesting note on *κακολογέω* -vs- *διαλέγομαι* [kakologeo -vs- dialogomai]. Both words are speech words (see the root *logos* in each. One is to “speak evil” (kako) while the other is to “thoroughly speak” (dia). Before you and I make decisions, we should be alert to the issue of how thorough we have heard the information rather than how damaging one report may be.
 - The **school** was the *σχολή* [scholē], and the word was related to *scolazo*, “to have leisure.” In Greek culture, it was *leisure* to learn, an activity of the well-to-do who could take time to listen to a lecture. Greek society valued the “lecture hall” perhaps more than any society.
- Verse 10 –
 - It is difficult to tell whether over this **space of two years** Paul was preaching the Kingdom (national) or the individual Gospel. Because **both Jews and Greeks** had **heard the word of the Lord Jesus**, and because Paul had left the synagogue, we would *assume* that he was sharing the individual, “by-grace-through-faith” gospel of salvation. However, every clue from the text speaks of the Kingdom gospel. These clues include:
 - The fact that the text expressly says that he began by teaching **the kingdom of God** (v. 8) and when he departed from the synagogue the text never says the message changed.
 - The fact that **special miracles** (v. 11) were performed, such miracles always being associated with the kingdom, not with the message of individual salvation.
 - The fact that those who heard and believed the message **confessed, and shewed their deeds** (v. 18), words that are related to the kingdom message.
 - With this evidence, I conclude that Paul had a kingdom message to the Ephesians. The salvation message may have been mixed in but was not the focus. Furthermore, the only evidence for an individual message is the fact that Greeks were present and accepted the message, but this does not speak definitively to the content of the message, because even the kingdom message had a

gentile element (see Cornelius, for example). Remember that the Apostle John (apostle to the Jews) is assumed by tradition to be a resident of Ephesus, and that the Jewish community there was huge.

- Possible scenarios:
 - Paul only preached the Kingdom message, and later Timothy continued and shared the grace message.
 - Paul preached both messages, but the kingdom message is emphasized in this text.
 - Of course, evangelicals would mix kingdom and grace and assume this to be only one message (and would be confused by this discussion, due to their confusion on the two messages to begin with).
- Verses 11-12 –
 - These words display *kingdom power* and seem to be connected to the ministry of Israel (see 1 Cor. 1:22).
 - The Jews required a sign not because they were thrilled with showmanship, but because God had always displayed Himself to them in signs and used these as proof that the work was of Him.
 - Here, **God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul** so that the Jews would believe his message.
 - The presence of **evil spirits** was also something that was almost totally associated with the kingdom offer.
 - The miracles were undeniable and spectacular. They were also *temporary*. Later Paul left a man sick, unable to heal him (2 Tim. 4:20).

ACTS 19:13-20 | THE THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY: EPHESUS, PART 3

- Verse 13 –
 - As further evidence that the Ephesian experience was almost totally Jewish, now we have **certain of the vagabond Jews** (that is, Jews who roam about, in this case, *traveling exorcists*).
 - Historical note: Josephus writes about the gifts of Solomon in exorcism, and states that there was a group of people in Josephus' day who followed the manner of Solomon in driving out demons. See *Antiquities of the Jews*, VIII, ii, 45-49.
 - This particular band of exorcists decided to call upon **Jesus whom Paul preacheth** as their source of power.
 - Note that the word **exorcists** is ἐξορκιστής [exorkistes] and the word **adjure** is ὀρκίζω [horkizo], both from the same root.
- Verse 14 –
 - The **seven sons of one Sceva** were among the exorcists (not Sceva himself). Sceva was a **Jew** and **chief of the priests**. Note that this position is not the same as *high priest*, which was a position in Jerusalem.
 - According to Bullinger in *The Companion Bible*, "Every town with a synagogue had a Sanhedrin of twenty-three members, if there were 120 Jews in the place; of three members, if there were fewer. Sceva was a member of the Sanhedrin at Ephesus."
- Verses 15-20 – *stay tuned!*