

~ACTS~

Lesson 61- An Open Door in Ephesus

Acts 19:8-10

At the end of chapter 18 (18:23), Paul began his 3rd missionary journey. He began by passing through the region of Galatia, strengthening the churches, with the intention of getting back to the hungry hearts in Ephesus. Now several months later, Paul arrives back in Ephesus and finds disciples, but they had only been baptized into the baptism of John. And last week we saw how Paul brought these 12 men in Ephesus to Salvation into the Name of Jesus.

Now today we're going to see Paul's fruitful ministry in Ephesus as Luke describes his three-year stay in this city and the great work of the Gospel being proclaimed throughout all of Asia during this time. Through the entirety of chapter 19, Luke continues describing events that took place during Paul's stay in Ephesus during his 3rd journey. However, these next three verses that we will study today summarize the fruitful ministry Paul had in Ephesus. Let's start by reading these verses, **Acts 19:8-10**.

As I have been studying this 3rd journey, it has become obvious to me that these next three years are quite possibly the most fruitful years of his ministry. Therefore, today as we go through these next three verses, I want to show the importance of this time in Ephesus. A time that not only changed the region of Asia Minor, but we will see how these next few years in Ephesus had a major impact on the entire world, and not just in the first century, but even 2,000 years later his ministry is still bearing fruit for the kingdom.

19:8) And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God.

This is always Paul's method... to the Jew first then the Gentile. Remember, they like Paul in the synagogue here in Ephesus, at least at the beginning. We saw this at the end of his 2nd journey, they were begging him to stay longer, Acts 18:20. This is a very different response than what we have seen in the past. Usually, the Jews want to kill Paul. Which we will find that eventually it does turn out like this, but at least for three months, there are soft hearted Jews in Ephesus that want to hear the Gospel.

Luke says he **spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading**. This is the 5th time Luke has used this word "reasoning," *διαλέγομαι*, to describe Paul's preaching. He thoroughly explained in a logical manner from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ. And he did this for three months. The longest he has ever been able to stay preaching to the Jews in the synagogue. Paul stayed there while there as long as they were hungry and had soft hearts to hear the Gospel. And during this time many were being saved until the religious leaders stirred up the multitudes against them and hardened their hearts toward the message.

9) But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus.

There is a connection you don't see in the English as there often is in the Greek. Luke says in verse 8 that Paul was **reasoning and persuading**. This word persuade is *πείθω*. It is the root word of *πίστις*- faith, belief or trust. So there were Jews who were believing, but then there were hard hearted Jews who did not believe. Verse 9 says they were *ἀπειθέω*- unpersuaded. It is the same word as verse 8 but with a negative alpha prefix. And not only did they not believe, but they went a step further to demonstrate their hard heart by speaking evil of The Way. And they begin stirring up the multitudes as they often did. They are not just speaking evil of Christians, but remember, who is The Way? It is Jesus Christ, John 14:6. In witnessing to people, they might bad mouth you or other Christians, but when they start speaking evil of Jesus Christ, who is the ONLY WAY to Salvation, it is clear they have hardened their heart and there is no use in continuing the conversation.

So notice what Paul does... **he departed from them and withdrew the disciples**. This is very emphatic in the Greek because Luke uses the preposition *ἀπό*, meaning "away from," three times, *ἀποστάς ἀπ' αὐτῶν*

ἀφώρισε τοὺς μαθητάς. He stood away from... away from them and separated the disciples away. Paul saw the hard hearts of the Jews and didn't want the believers being swayed, so he separated the believers, and they started meeting in the school of Tyrannus. Some people today would call this dividing the congregation, but Paul is being a good shepherd and tending his flock, staving off the wolves. Paul speaks about the adversaries and intense persecution that came against him while he was in Ephesus, **1 Corinthians 16:9; 15:32; 2 Corinthians 1:8-10; Acts 20:17-19, 29-31.**

Within the first three months, the unbelieving Jews begin attacking and blaspheming The Way and this continued for many years to come. In fact, in 66ad, Paul wrote his second letter to Timothy, who was the bishop of Ephesus facing major persecution as well, and he was encouraging him to stand strong in the face of persecution, 2 Tim 1:8; 2:3, 8-10, 16, 22-23; 3:1-5, 12; 4:3, 5.

So Paul withdrew, not out of fear, but because they rejected the Word of God. This is what he always did. When the Jews hardened, he would turn to the Gentiles, **Acts 13:44-46.** Up until this point, Paul had only been in Ephesus for three months, and now we see his ministry explode to all of Asia as he begins teaching in the school of Tyrannus. Luke says he was **reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus.** This word "reasoning" is the same word, *διαλέγομαι*. (6th time Luke uses this word to describe Paul's teaching). As a result of the Jews hardening, Paul decides to start teaching a daily Bible study in a secular place called the School of Tyrannus. The building isn't what makes up the church. The building isn't holy, it is the saints who meet in the building who are holy.

Who is this guy Tyrannus? The Greek literally says, the school of a certain tyrannus, *τύραννος τινός*. I don't think his name was Tyrannus, it was probably a title saying he was the absolute ruler or master of the school. There is an early codex called Codex Bezae that adds some additional information. This codex says he was reasoning daily in the school of a certain tyrannus from the 5th hour until the 10th, *καθ' ἡμέραν διαλεγόμενος ἐν τῇ σχολῇ τυραννίου τινος ἀπὸ ὥρας · ε · εὓς δεκάτης*. This would be from 11am to 4pm.

It's not Scripture, because no other manuscripts have this phrase, but in this region, it was common for businesses to shut down in the afternoon because of the heat of the day. Kind of like a siesta. So this was the Ephesian siesta and Paul took advantage of this opportunity. He saw this school wasn't being used during this time, so he worked out an arrangement with this school master and held a five-hour Bible study every afternoon. And notice the fruit that this Bible study bore in verse 10...

10) And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the Word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

Paul taught these believers for five hours every day for two years in the heat of the day. And as a result, all of Asia heard about Jesus. And it was from this Bible study that the churches in Asia were established and began to grow. And notice the commitment of these believers in Ephesus. When all their friends were taking a siesta or some kind of break in the middle of the day, these believers were dedicated to the Word of God, and it changed the world.

In the past, Paul had traveled from city to city preaching the Word. And he is still doing this, but notice he has a lot more help. He is starting to send out other faithful men and they are starting churches around the world too. There were nine churches in Asia that were born out from this Bible study in the school of Tyrannus. Seven of them had a personal letter from Jesus written to them: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea, Revelation 2:1-3:22. Plus, we also know of the church of Colosse and Hierapolis from Paul's letters, Col 4:13.

Most of these churches, if not all of them, were house churches. And it is so fascinating to see the network of the Gospel that Paul has established throughout the world. I love reading the salutations in his letters about the faithful saints that are working alongside the Apostle Paul. And we specifically learn about

some of the house churches in Asia when Paul writes to the Colossians and Philemon, [Philemon 1-2, 10](#); [Col 4:7-18](#). Paul and his fellow-workers have established these house churches throughout Asia and Paul, being the faithful shepherd in his deep concern for the churches, took care of them and taught them during these three years, [Acts 20:20](#).

Along with teaching in the school of Tyrannus, edifying the believers and establishing these Asian churches, Paul also stays in very close contact with the Corinthian church. He does this over the course of the next four years of his journey by writing four letters to the Corinthians, plus he is going to write the book of Romans from Corinth as well. Today, we have two of the four Corinthian letters in the canon of our Bible. We know them as 1 and 2 Corinthians, the other two are no longer extant. Plus, Paul makes two personal visits to Corinth during this time as well.

So during his three year stay in Ephesus, not only was Paul establishing the saints in Asia, but he was also deeply concerned with the Corinthian church to keep them on the right path. Next week we are going to take an overview of the first epistle to the Corinthians, but in preparation for that, I wanted to show you the timeline of Paul's dealings with this church from Ephesus on his 3rd Journey.

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| Fall 54ad | • (3 rd Journey begins) Paul travels through Galatia and comes to Ephesus, Acts 18:23 |
| 55ad | • While Paul travels through Galatia, Apollos comes to Ephesus, is taught the Truth by Aquila and Priscilla and goes to Corinth, Acts 18:24-28; 19:1; 1 Cor 1:12; 3:6; 4:6 |
| | • Paul arrives in Ephesus and teaches in the synagogue for 3 months, Acts 19:8. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ During this time he writes the “previous letter” to the Corinthians, 1 Cor 5:9 |
| 55-56ad | • Paul sends Timothy to deliver this “previous letter” and Timothy stays with the Corinthians to edify the church, 1 Cor 4:17 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ From Corinth, Timothy travels to Macedonia and returns back through Corinth on his way back to Ephesus after being gone for about one year, 1 Cor 16:10-11 |
| 55ad | • The hard-hearted Jews have rejected him in the synagogue and Paul is now teaching in the school of Tyrannus and does so for two years, Acts 19:9-10 |
| 56ad | • While Timothy is in Corinth and Macedonia, Apollos returns probably delivering the letter from Choe’s household. This prompts Paul to write what we know as 1 Corinthians, 1 Cor 1:11; 5:1; 16:12 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Apollos doesn’t want to go back to deliver this letter, 1 Cor 16:12, so Paul may have sent Tychicus instead. |
| | • After being in Macedonia, Timothy returns and passes through Corinth on his way back to Ephesus. By this time the Corinthians have read the letter of 1 Corinthians in response to Chloe’s letter. Timothy sees that they have not responded well to Paul’s letter, so Timothy returns to Ephesus and tells Paul. |
| 57ad | • Paul is grieved to hear this response, so Paul decides to visit them personally. This second visit is known as the “sorrowful visit,” 2 Cor 2:1; 12:14; 13:1-2. |
| 57ad | • This second visit didn’t seem to accomplish much so when he returns to Ephesus, he writes the “severe letter,” 2 Cor 2:3-4; 7:8. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Paul sends Titus to deliver this “severe letter,” 2 Cor 7:12-16. ○ It is possible that Timothy and Erastus go with him, Acts 19:22. ○ After delivering the letter, Titus goes to Troas, while Timothy and Erastus go to Macedonia. |

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| 57-58ad | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul's teaching in Ephesus is affecting all of Asia, Acts 19:10. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ House churches throughout all Asia are being established, Philemon 1-2; Col 4:9-17; 1 Cor 16:9 ○ God works mightily through Paul with unusual miracles to validate his message, Acts 19:11-17 ○ Many people in Asia are coming to Jesus and renouncing their pagan ways; burning books of magic, Acts 19:19-20 |
| 58ad | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About this time and shortly after sending the "severe letter," and all of Asia hearing the Gospel, a riot breaks out amongst Demetrius the silversmith along with the pagan Ephesians accusing Paul of disgracing the goddess Diana, Acts 19:23-41. • After the uproar, Paul leaves Ephesus and travels to Troas to meet Titus, Acts 20:1; 2 Cor 2:12-13. • Paul can't find Titus, so he travels to Macedonia and finds Timothy and Erastus, Acts 20:2; 2 Cor 7:5. • Titus then joins Paul, Timothy and Erastus in Macedonia and gives them a good report of the Corinthian church, 2 Cor 7:5-7. (Probably their first good report) • Paul and Timothy stay write 2 Corinthians (the 4th letter) in Macedonia. This is about one year after the sorrowful visit, 2 Cor 8:10. • Paul urges Titus to go back to Corinth to deliver the letter of 2nd Corinthians (the 4th letter) and tell them to get the contribution/collection ready for the saints at Jerusalem, 2 Cor 8:1-7 • Paul and Timothy depart Macedonia and go to Greece (probably Corinth) for three months, Acts 20:2-3. This is the 3rd visit to Corinth, 2 Cor 12:14; 13:1. • Paul writes the book of Romans during this three month stay in Corinth, Romans 16:1, 23. • Paul and the company travel back to Macedonia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Paul goes to Philippi to get brother Luke after leaving him in Philippi for 6 years to edify the church, Acts 20:6 ○ The rest of the company travel to Troas to await Paul and Luke's arrival, Acts 20:3-6 • Paul and company travel to Jerusalem in haste to make it back for the Day of Pentecost, Acts 20:16 • But on his way back, Paul meets with the elders of the Ephesian church in Miletus to give them a final salutation, Acts 20:17-38. |
| 58ad | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul returns to Jerusalem and is arrested ending his 3rd missionary journey, Acts 21:1-34. |