

The Third Missionary Journey: Ephesus (cont'd)

1. In turning from the Jews in the synagogue, what does Paul do next, for how long, and how often (19:8-10)? Who is influenced, how far is the Gospel spread? How might a church today reach out to and teach the community it serves in a similar manner?
2. Compare the effects of people's touching Paul's handkerchiefs (vv. 11-12) with those when people touched Peter's shadow (5:12-16) and the edge of Jesus' cloak (Matthew 9:20-26). What is the power on display here? Should we expect to see similar manifestations of power today? Why or why not? And, if not, why did this power operate not just through Jesus but also through his early followers?
3. What do you think is being described in verses 13-16? (Compare Matthew 7:22-23.) Why can't Jesus' name be used to magically cast out demons? What else is necessary for that name to be effective (see Acts 3:16; Matthew 13:54-56; Mark 6:4-6)? How might you reconcile this with the scene described in Mark 9:38-41?
4. Why did the Ephesian converts elect to burn their books on the magic arts (19:17-20)? Book burning certainly has negative connotations these days. What, positively, is being conveyed here? Why the reference to the enormous price of these books in their aggregate (v. 19)? How might you understand and apply this passage for yourselves (or for new converts) today?
5. What is the motive of Demetrius, and the pretext for the riot (19:23-27)? (Note that the Temple of Artemis in Ephesus was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, and that the Greek goddess Artemis (Roman name Diana), the goddess of forests and hills, of fertility, the huntress goddess, had been conflated with Cybele, the Mountain Mother, the fertility goddess of Asia Minor. Cybele was associated with a mystery cult that commemorated the castration and death of her son, Attis, and her resurrection of him; her priests castrated themselves and wore women's vestments to serve her.)
6. Can you see this riot in your mind's eye (19:28-34)? How are Gaius and Aristarchus protected from the mob (19:35-41)? Why did Paul and Peter consider it important that Christians obey civil laws? See Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17. How does that obedience promote the Kingdom of God?