

Acts 19:8-20

January 11, 2026



CONVERSATION STARTERS

What are some highs or lows you experienced this past week?

What Scripture has been shaping you recently?

Where have you seen God moving in your life this week?

What did you hear in today's sermon OR read in today's passage that you would like to discuss?

What did you learn about yourself in today's sermon or passage?

What did you learn about God in today's sermon or passage?

What convicted you as you listened to today's sermon or read in today's passage?

MAIN POINT

Paul boldly persisted in sharing the good news in Ephesus until "all the residents of Asia, both Jews and Greeks, heard the word of the Lord" (v.10).

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What are your takeaways from our study of Acts so far?

What happened with the men and women in the early church in our reading last week?

What does it mean for there to be power in the name of Jesus?

Last week we checked in with Paul's journeys and Priscilla and Aquila, his "coworkers in Christ Jesus" (Romans 16:3) as all they continued working for the gospel. This week,



we will continue with Paul and read about the events taking place in the early church at this time.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

 ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ ACTS 19:8-10.

How would you describe Paul's actions in verses 8-10?

What can we learn from Paul about persistence in the face of hardship?

Paul was preaching “boldly” in the synagogue (v.8). “Bold” is an excellent word to describe Paul’s evangelistic style. He did this for three months, and though we see a similar pattern emerge, (some Jews believed, but some rejected) we get the sense that the Jews in Ephesus were more open to the gospel than some of the previous places Paul had preached. Note that Luke specified that “some became hardened and would not believe” (v.9, emphasis added), but Paul seems to not have encountered the same radical resistance he met in other places (where riots were incited).

The slander from the unbelieving Jews did not slow Paul down though. He left the synagogue and carried on arguing and persuading for the gospel in the “lecture hall of Tyrannus” (v.9).

Tyrannus was apparently either the owner of this lecture hall or taught there regularly enough for his name to be associated with it. This lecture hall hasn’t been discovered today, but inscriptions of his name have been found in sites from this time in Ephesus!

Paul persisted in ministry in Ephesus for two years. Where vengeful Jews had driven Paul from many a city, that did not happen in Ephesus. Luke recorded that “all of the residents of Asia, both Jews and Greeks, heard the word of the Lord” (v.10). This was possible because Paul was persistent!

We will meet opposition. Jesus spoke of this truth, we see this in the New Testament, and we see it in church history too. When we meet opposition, though, and continue to faithfully follow the Holy Spirit’s guidance, God works (even if it doesn’t look like we thought or hoped).

 ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ ACTS 19:11-20.

What took place in verses 11-20?



Why do you think the Jewish exorcists were not successful? What made them different from Paul?

What does this teach us about the power of Jesus?

Luke immediately gave credit for the miracles from Paul's hand: "God was performing extraordinary miracles by Paul's hands" (v.11, emphasis added). Ancient Ephesus was an epicenter for pagan worship, and God displayed His power over the occult through miracles like these. Even cloths that had touched Paul were used to heal the sick and demon possessed.

The "itinerant Jewish exorcists" (v.13) also attempted to tap into Jesus's power and perform extraordinary miracles of their own (ancient magical practices would often invoke divine names like this), but this was not successful. Simply invoking Christ's name was not enough. The seven sons of Sceva didn't know Jesus and therefore did not have the authority to use His name in this manner.

The evil spirit said to them: "I know Jesus, and I recognize Paul—but who are you?" (v.15). If they had been operating under Christ's authority, the evil spirit would have recognized it, but they were pretenders and the results were severe. The man with the evil spirit jumped them, overpowered them, and they left naked and beaten (v.16). For these sons of a high priest, things did not go according to plan, but as always, God worked. We see the Holy Spirit moving at the end of this passage where we learn that Jesus's name was "held in high esteem" (v.17) and many who practiced magic repented so fully that they burned the tools of their trade—costly magic books.

The result? "In this way the word of the Lord spread and prevailed." (v.20) Praise God.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

How was God at work in our passage today?

What type of roadblocks did Paul encounter when he shared the gospel? What type of roadblocks do we encounter today? How can we overcome them?

How have you seen God work in situations that didn't go according to plan in your life?



PRAYER

Close your time together by sharing prayer requests, praying for each other, and the group.

Thank God for giving us boldness to share His good news even when we face opposition. Ask Him for help as you share the gospel in your community today. Thank Him for working even when things don't work out like you hoped. Ask for His help as you continue in your study of God's Word.

LOOKING AHEAD

Encourage your group to look ahead as we continue the series on Acts next week.

January 18, 2026 --- Acts 19:21-41

COMMENTARY

Acts 19:8-20

19:8 Paul apparently encountered the Ephesian disciples (vv. 1–7) before he had a chance to visit the synagogue. His discussion there, marks only the second time that Paul mentioned the kingdom of God in his preaching as recorded in Acts (14:22).

19:9 Paul withdrew from the synagogue when the Way was slandered and it became obvious that the crowd would not believe. His choice seems in keeping with Jesus's teachings (see Mt 7:6; Lk 9:3–5). Tyrannus either owned the lecture hall or taught there regularly. Inscriptions bearing his name have been found in Ephesus, dating to this time. The actual lecture hall has not been discovered.

19:10 After three months of speaking in the synagogue (v. 8), Paul spent another two years teaching in Ephesus, making a significant impact on the province of Asia. A number of other events recorded elsewhere about Paul's life may have occurred during this time. These included imprisonments and beatings (2Co 1:8–10; 11:23–25).

19:11–12 God's power through faith was at work in these healings (see 5:15–16; see also Lk 8:44). That Paul's personal items (facecloths or aprons) were involved demonstrates his identity as an apostle.

19:13 Itinerant Jewish exorcists attempted to use Jesus's name to command evil spirits. Ancient magic traditions often involved the invocation of divine names.

19:14 Numerous ancient Jewish nonbiblical texts attest to the interplay of magic and Judaism.



19:15 It takes more than the invocation of powerful names to gain the upper hand over demonic forces. The evil spirit knew that the exorcists did not share in Christ's authority through faith.

19:16 The consequences of frivolously invoking Jesus's name were severe. That the men fled naked was especially humiliating since Jews shunned nudity.

19:17–18 The name of the Lord Jesus, rather than being abused, was held in high esteem when people realized the power of the Lord was not available for just anyone to control and manipulate.

19:19–20 Books were expensive in ancient times. The fifty thousand pieces of silver could be the Greek drachma or the Roman denarius. Either way it would have been a large sum of money.

