

## REFLECTION GUIDE

### ACTS 19:1-41 | IS JESUS LORD?

#### KEY TERMS

**Ephesus** - Ephesus was a prominent Roman city known for its large amphitheater, which could hold around 25,000 people, and its temple to Artemis, which was one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

**Artemis** - Artemis was a goddess portrayed in both Greek and Roman mythology (called Diana by the Romans), but in Ephesus she was the local deity who was thought to be the protector of young women and childbearing.

**Jewish Exorcists** - A group of Jews who made their living traveling around practicing magic and claiming to perform exorcisms. They wanted to harness Jesus' power for personal gain.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

When Luke calls the miracles in verse 11 *extraordinary*, the phrase he uses literally means "not the common one/way." God used these miracles to bear fruit in Ephesus, but they were not typical in Paul's ministry.

#### BACKGROUND

While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul, who had briefly returned to his home base in Antioch (Acts 18:22-23), headed back to Ephesus. There he met a group that Luke calls *disciples* (v. 1) who were baptized with John the Baptist's baptism and had not received the Holy Spirit. Although some make the argument that these were genuine Christians who had simply not received the Holy Spirit, most commentators argue that this group were disciples of John who did not know the gospel and were not believers. However, Paul has an opportunity to tell the group about Jesus and baptize them (v. 5). Paul's ministry bore great fruit in Ephesus as Luke records that *all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks* (v. 10).

During his time in Ephesus, God demonstrated his power by healing people who simply touched articles of Paul's clothing (v. 11-12). This led exorcists and magicians in the city to attempt to take Jesus' power for themselves. This resulted in a powerful encounter between seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva who try to cast out a demon in Jesus' name and are instead overpowered by the demon and forced out of the house naked and beaten (vv. 14-16). Following this incident, some Christians in Ephesus, who had continued to practice magic, confessed their sin and burned their magic books (vv. 18-19). Prior to Paul leaving Ephesus, a group becomes angry that their business of selling shrines of Artemis has been harmed by the conversion of many in Ephesus and he instigates a riot where some of Paul's companions are dragged before the crowd (vv. 23-34). The crowd is ultimately calmed by the town clerk when he warns them they may be accused of rioting (vv. 35-41).

#### GOING DEEPER

Reread Acts 19:28-32. Describe the scene depicted here. What is motivating the crowd? How does the crowd respond when their livelihood and/or beliefs are challenged? Now reread Acts 19:8-10. What does the beginnings of Christianity teach us about how Jesus message will be received (both positive and negative)?

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

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#### LEARNING THE WORD

1. Read Acts 19:1-10. In this story we see a group of disciples who were following what they knew about God but their understanding was incomplete. What did they have right? What did they need to learn?
2. Read Acts 19:11-20. In what ways does this section illustrate that Jesus is Lord who has the right to rule over all?
3. Read Acts 19:21-41. How is the riot in Ephesus a direct result of the transformation of peoples' lives in Ephesus? What lessons can we learn from this incident?

#### LIVING THE WORD

4. Commenting on verses 1-7, John Stott said, "The norm of Christian (salvation), then, is a cluster of four things: repentance, faith in Jesus, water baptism, and the gift of the Spirit." When you consider your own conversion do you see all four present? Do you have questions or doubts about any of the four?
5. In verses 18-19, a group of Christians in Ephesus confesses that they have still been participating in sinful practices and they burn their magic books. What areas of your life do you find it hardest to give over and entrust to Jesus and why?
6. Considering those areas that are hardest to give over and entrust to Jesus, what would you *gain* if you surrendered those to Christ's rule?
7. Read Hebrews 12:1-2. How did Jesus model entrusting everything to God? How does that encourage you to do the same?