

Acts of Jesus 42 Assaulting Strongholds notes

We come to a place that sends us back in our studies to an event that happened much earlier in Paul's ministry. **Acts 16:6**.

--In Ch. 19, Paul is returning and is going to have possibly the most fruitful ministry of his career in this region.

--Several things that this teaches us:

1. God doesn't bless all ministry – only what He's doing...Make sure you are doing what He would have you do.
2. When God shuts a door on a ministry, don't immediately scrap it. If it is something that has touched your heart, God probably put it there.
--The thing you may be confused about is the timing.
3. Let God stop you...Paul did.
--Most of us look at the overwhelming odds and let that stop us (time, money, energy restraints).
--Paul is now stepping into one of the worst pagan centers on the planet and is going to find it to be a very fruitful field.
4. This answers the question "What is God up to?" -- He's up to good, that's what!
--When God doesn't make sense, know that He's up to good!

Ephesus is the capital of the province of Asia and it's also the capital of magical arts, sorceries, and the casting of spells.

--Temple to Diana – one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world – the largest temple the Greek world ever built, and it stood on the harbor of Ephesus -- it was a demonic stronghold.

--It was to the Ephesians that Paul wrote: **Eph. 6:12**

--It was from Ephesus that Paul wrote to the Corinthians: **II Cor. 10:4-5.**

--How did he know? He had first-hand experience at Ephesus!

1. Let's watch this happen: Acts 19:1-20

1. First of all the **Stronghold of Incomplete religion: VV. 1-2**

--Uh-oh! There's a problem! **Romans 8:9**

--**V. 3** = 2nd "Uh-oh" as Paul explains --- **V. 4.**

--**VV. 5-7** – This was not as the result of the so-called 2nd blessing this was as a result of salvation.

--If these men who were religious and who even believed that the Messiah was coming and who were waiting for Him still had to place their faith in Him.

--Again, no one will be saved apart from a personal experience in which you place your faith in Christ.

--You believe that He's the Savior; You believe that in Him we have forgiveness of sins, but have you ever crossed the line yourself?

--As an aside, notice the order here: First salvation by faith, then water Baptism (there are no exceptions to this order)

--They were baptized by John before salvation, but they needed to be baptized again after the fact.

2. Stronghold of dead religion: VV. 8-10

--He spends 3 months speaking in this synagogue whereas he only spends a max of 3 weeks in any other.

--Why is that? Because of the darkness of this city, people were more

- open to the light.
- The darkest place was this synagogue—How do we know? Because The spirit of the Antichrist is here!
- The darkest places in the world are not the bars and night clubs and places of immorality; not the places of satanic worship and the occult.
- The darkest places in the world are the places where people meet to discuss the God of the Bible without taking Him seriously and without receiving His Son.
- They have to be the darkest because they are extremely close to the light and yet cannot see it.
- V. 10** says this was a successful ministry in the middle of multiple layers of strongholds. God showed Himself much stronger.

3. Stronghold of **false religion**: **VV. 11-12**

- Notice first of all that these are among the stranger miracles that are in Scripture.
- These rags are literally sweat rags (Greek) and the apron is leather one used by a craftsman.
- Luke uses the word **tychousas** which is best translated “extraordinary” (Like there are “ordinary” miracles?!)
- Why special miracles? Because this is a special place full of magic and demonic supernatural displays.
- Since they are somewhat accustomed to the supernatural, **God gives them the real supernatural.**

4. Finally, the only stronghold that hinders the work of God is assaulted: **Strongholds within the Body.**

- This revival is brought about by demons?!
- Watch: **VV. 12-15** – Interesting that there are 2 words for “know” used here = “Jesus I know” = to know well.
“Paul I know” = to be acquainted with.
- VV. 16-20** – The price of the books would have been roughly equivalent to a years wage for 150 men or about **6 million dollars** @ \$40,000/year in modern terms.
- Why did the Word of God grow mightily and prevail? Because the **believers burned their stuff.**
- They got rid of the stuff that God disagreed with.
- What holds back the work of God today? Not the pagan society we live in; it’s the secret stuff in our lives.
- The church was designed to be a light.
- There is nothing at all wrong with the light within us.
- If world can’t see it, it’s because we’ve dirtied the lenses.**