

**PRAYER FOCUS:** *Pray for the Word of God to prevail!*

**HIDE IT IN OUR HEARTS:** *Linger in the Text and Let it Dwell Richly*

*“But I will remain in Ephesus until Pentecost; for a wide door for effective service has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.”*

**—1 Corinthians 16:8, 9**



Sunday, March 20, 2022



## **Into the Darkness**

### **Open Doors and the Presence of Adversaries**

*“But I will remain in Ephesus until Pentecost; for a wide door for effective service has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.”*

**—1 Corinthians 16:8, 9**

**HEAR IT:** Listen to the Text and Discover the Truth

#### **Introduction:**

Paul’s extended stay in Ephesus at the beginning of his third missionary journey provided for him both **opportunity** and **opposition**. That is not only clear from reading the narrative of Acts 19, but also from Paul’s own description of his experience in Ephesus from our theme verse above. As we revisit this narrative, may the Lord encourage us to persevere in spite of the pressures or the problems that may arise as we proclaim the gospel in our community.

#### **READ OR REVIEW THE PASSAGE: ACTS 19:8-20.**

*Use this morning’s notes to assist in answering the discussion questions.*

**HASH IT OUT:** Look into the Text and Develop the Truth

1. As it relates to the “**adversaries**” that Paul faced in Ephesus, what are the **three sources of opposition** mentioned this morning that we find in this 19th chapter (two of which we looked at today and the third will be our focus next week)?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_ (v. 8-10), b. \_\_\_\_\_ (v. 11-20)
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_ (v. 21-41)

2. How long was Paul's ministry in Ephesus and how did this compare to his other stops? What other verses in addition to 19:8-10 do you need to consider to put the time frame together?
3. What designation, found in both verse 9 and verse 23, is used to describe believers in Ephesus. What is the significance of this description?
4. While Paul's time in the Synagogue in Ephesus lasted longer than usual (3 months), what eventually was the response of the Jewish community? What three expressions does Luke use to describe their response (v. 9)?
5. Paul moved his ministry to the School of Tyrannus where he taught daily for two years. According to one of the New Testament manuscripts, do you remember the time of day that the School was made available to Paul, and possibly why?
6. Paul's extended time of teaching and preaching in Ephesus resulted in what according to verse 10? What other churches may have been planted and other cities evangelized during this time? And who may have helped to spread the gospel and start these congregations during Paul's years in Ephesus?
7. Paul's primary task was the proclamation of the gospel. But there were times when his ministry was accompanied by miracles, as it was here. What was *the primary purpose of the miracles* for Paul, as well as the other apostles?

- a. Though the apostle was the *agency* of the miracles ("by his hands"), according to the passage, who was *author* of the miracles?
- b. The apostles held a unique place in redemptive history. According to Ephesians 2:20 they were a part the foundation of the church. And according to Hebrews 2:3-4, what role did the signs and wonders serve that accompanied the apostles?
- c. Jesus has *ultimate authority* by reason of His \_\_\_\_\_. His followers, including His apostles, have only *delegated authority*. In speaking of authority, Pastor addressed the two terms the New Testament uses and their relationship to one another. Do you remember the terms and their distinction?
8. Sceva and his sons were charlatans, seeking to exploit the power they saw in Paul and the message he was proclaiming. What was the response of the evil spirit and the one he possessed, and what did this reveal about Sceva and his sons?
9. In contrasting the paganism and spiritism of Ephesus and the signs and wonders that accompanied Paul, finish the statement that Pastor gave this morning... "*there is a profound difference between magic and miracles. One is \_\_\_\_\_, the other \_\_\_\_\_!*"
10. There is a danger in becoming preoccupied with the *miracles* and lose sight of the preeminence and power of the *message*. For that is what truly sets men free. The primary focus of this passage is found in verses 10 and 20 that encapsulate this story. Restate it and reflect upon it.
11. If you have the notes from this morning, Pastor gave three observations and exhortations concerning opposition. Review and discuss their significance as we wrap our discussion time.