

## Acts of Jesus, Lesson 40: Assaulting A Stronghold

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.**

- Here 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 scrap it. If it is something that has touched you heart, God probably put it there.
      - The only 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).
      - 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!
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Ephesus is the capital of the province of Asia and it's also the capital of magic 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; it stood on the harbor of Ephesus.
  - Call it a demonic stronghold.
  - It was to the Ephesians that Paul wrote **Ephesians 6:12**
  - It was from Ephesus that Paul wrote to the Corinthians: **II Corinthians 10:4-5.**
  - How did he know? He had first-hand experience at Ephesus!!!
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### ➤ **Acts 19:1-20**

1. First of all, the Stronghold of Incomplete religion: **Verses 1-2**
    - **Romans 8:9**
    - **Acts 16:3 - Acts 16:4.**
    - **Verses 5-7** – This was not as the result of the so-called 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.
    - They were baptized by John before salvation, but they needed to be baptized again after the fact of salvation because that is the biblical order.
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### 2. Stronghold of dead religion: **Verses 8-10**

- He spends 3 months speaking in this synagogue whereas he only spends a max of 3 weeks in any other synagogue.
  - Why is that? Because of the darkness of this city, people were more open to the light.
  - 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.
- ✓ Are you limiting what God can do because of what you see as insurmountable odds???
- ✓ **God's only limit is His church.**
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### 3. Stronghold of false religion: **Verses 11-12**

- Notice first of all that these are among the stranger miracles that exist in Scripture.
  - These rags are literally sweat rags (Greek), and the apron is leather one used by a craftsman.
  - Luke uses the word 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 the real supernatural.**
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### 4. Finally, the only stronghold that hinders the work of God is assaulted: Strongholds within the Body of Christ.

- This revival is brought about by demonic activity, of all sources!
  - Watch: **Verses 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.
  - **Verses 16-20** – The price of the books would have been roughly equivalent to **6 million dollars!**
  - 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 lens.**
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