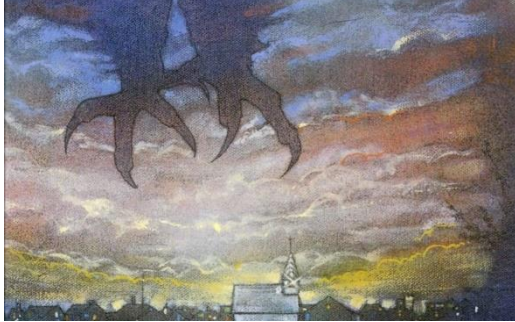


**Acts: This Present Darkness**  
June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021

INTRODUCTION

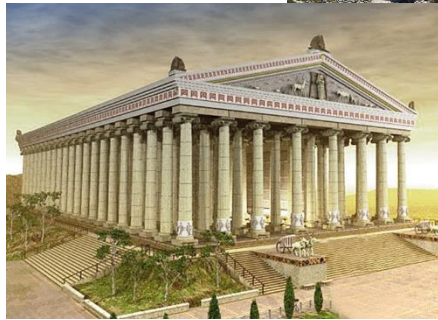


*For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of **this present darkness**, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*

Eph. 6:12 (RSV)

Ephesus

- Greatest city-center in Asia
- 25,000 seat amphitheater
- Temple of Artemis



CONTENT

- a) Ephesus ministry (19:8-10)
  - In Jewish synagogue—*3 months*
  - In secular lecture hall—*2 years*
- b) Ephesus miracles (19:11-22)
  - *Ephesian writings* slang for *occult*
  - *Extraordinary* handkerchiefs & aprons!?
  - *Expensive* repentance
- c) Ephesus mob (19:23-41)
  - Selfish silversmiths
  - Cool-headed city clerk

APPLICATION

1. If you build it, they might not come
2. How to win friends and influence people
3. A long obedience in the same direction

## Discussion Guide

*As always, these questions are intended as tools to help get a good conversation going—helping us better understand who we are, who God is and how this impacts how we live (or respond to Him). Please don't feel obligated to rigidly go through each one. Park on ones that stir up good conversation. Feel free to wander where the conversation takes you. As always, make sure to wrap up with application (this is after all, the main point)—how is this encouraging, strengthening or challenging YOUR faith and how can we live the message of this book out more faithful in OUR lives.*

*Blessings...Andrew*

1. Have you ever read a book (fictional or otherwise) about the reality of spiritual powers? How did this influence your worldview and faith?
2. Read Acts 19:8-10. What stands out to you? What questions does this raise?
3. How does the idea that Paul may well have worked as a tent-maker during the morning and evening hours while hosting gospel discussions during the city's extended *siesta*—between 11am & 4 pm—shape your reading of this story?
4. Read Acts 19:11-22. What stands out to you? What questions does this raise?
5. What are your thoughts on *crazy-sounding* miracle stories like this? What are your thoughts on idea of miracles today? Should we expect them?
6. Have you ever witnessed or been a part of a time of repentance that led to getting rid of things (throwing out, burning, destroying, etc.) in order to more fully, faithfully follow Jesus? Was your experience positive or negative? Is this kind of repentance something we should maybe see more of today?
7. Read Acts 19:23-41. What stands out to you? What questions does this raise?
8. Have you ever had focused negative attention fixed on you. What do you think it was like for Paul's companions to be in front of possible 25,000 angry people?
9. In the past many church's primary evangelism strategy was inviting un-churched people to church. In what ways was this effective? Is it still?
10. What are some of the biggest hurdles to us doing a better job of *going*—taking the good news of Jesus into the world? How could we better equip each other to do this better?
11. How easy is it for you to build friendships with people who have a different worldview and lifestyle? Is it natural over time, for you to share your story and perspective with them? What do you think made Paul so effective at fostering friendships and engaging in conversation?
12. *You and I tend to overestimate what we can accomplish in the short term, but underestimate what we can accomplish in the long term.* This isn't scripture by any means, but do you think this has anything to offer believers as we think about evangelism and outreach?
13. What was one thing that stood out to you from our teaching time today? What was one question this raised?
14. Where is God nudging or prompting your heart a bit? What might a faithful response look like? What is one step you could take to begin obeying Jesus (*responding to God*) in this regard?