



ENOGERA BAPTIST CHURCH
Jesus changes lives

ACTS



Acts #31 – 19:11-20 The Spiritual Battle

Acts 19:15 Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?

NOTE FOR LEADERS

This document is intended to be used as a discussion *guide*, rather than a curriculum. As small group leaders, please feel free to lead through the topic as most appropriate for your group.

HOUSEKEEPING

Things going at the moment:

- **By the Book Mini Course – An Introduction to the Bible and Its Big Story**
 - Monday Nights starting June 10 @ 7pm
 - Register on the website
 - \$10
- **Members Meetings**
 - June 9 & 23 after morning tea



#31 ACTS 19:11-20

REFLECT

This is a time to generate some discussion by reflecting on the ideas in this week's message. Some ideas include:

- Ask the group to debrief for those who have missed the sermons on Sunday
- What stood out? Do you have any questions?
- Were there any special moments of clarity where God spoke to you clearly?

DIG INTO THE WORD

Let's dig a little deeper. Use the biblical text to discover what God reveals to us in his Word.

Acts 19:11-20 The Sons of Sceva

¹¹ And God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, ¹² so that even handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his skin were carried away to the sick, and their diseases left them and the evil spirits came out of them. ¹³ Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists undertook to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul proclaims."¹⁴ Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this.¹⁵ But the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?" ¹⁶ And the man in whom was the evil spirit leaped on them, mastered all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. ¹⁷ And this became known to all the residents of Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks. And fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was extolled. ¹⁸ Also many of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices.¹⁹ And a number of those who had practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver.²⁰ So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily.

Ephesians 6:10-20 The Whole Armor of God

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. ¹⁴ Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; ¹⁷ and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, ¹⁸ praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep



alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,¹⁹ and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel,²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

Matt 6:9-13 Pray then like this:

“Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
¹⁰ Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread,
¹² and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
¹³ And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

Luke 8:27-33 Jesus and Legion

²⁷ When Jesus had stepped out on land, there met him a man from the city who had demons. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he had not lived in a house but among the tombs. ²⁸ When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him and said with a loud voice, “What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me.” ²⁹ For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many a time it had seized him. He was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert.) ³⁰ Jesus then asked him, “What is your name?” And he said, “Legion,” for many demons had entered him. ³¹ And they begged him not to command them to depart into the abyss. ³² Now a large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, and they begged him to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. ³³ Then the demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and drowned.





APPLY

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scriptures apply directly to their lives. Get group members to talk about the real life implications of the study.

1. **DISCUSS:** How are we to apply these things? Are there any immediate implications?
2. **TWO DEADLY MISTAKES:** There are two mistakes that we can fall into when it comes to the spiritual battle: either deny it exists, or fixate on it. Hopefully it is obvious why each error is dangerous – to deny these spiritual battles are a reality means we will be vulnerable to the work of the enemy, and yet to fixate on Satan is to let him receive more of our attention than God himself. In Christ we need not live in fear of these things.
 - a. *Which mistake do you think you are personally vulnerable to? What might we do to fight against that error?*
3. **THE TWO TYPES OF BATTLE:**
 - a. **THE COVERT BATTLE:** Much of the battle takes place in the ordinary stuff of life, nothing like a horror movie or our passage. We are told lies that we believe, get distracted, and find sin tempting.
 - b. **THE OVERT BATTLE:** Occasionally, the battle isn't covert but overt. It looks like Acts 19:11-20. This is not the norm for us, but it can still happen. Whether the battle is covert or overt, there are three things we need to know.
4. **THREE THINGS TO KNOW:**
 - a. **THE VICTORY IS CHRIST'S:** *Read Luke 8:27-33.* Jesus has overcome. The battle between good and evil isn't balancing on a knife edge. It's not even a fair fight! God the creator of all things has full victory over all forces of darkness. Jesus is king, and has disarmed the rules and powers in the cross. In Luke 8:27-33, you'll notice that the demons are terrified of Jesus. And the power that rose Jesus from the dead now lives in the Christian. You have nothing to fear if you are in Christ. *How can we remind ourselves of the victory of Christ when we feel overwhelmed by the battle? How can we help one another in this?*
 - b. **THE ROLE OF PRAYER:** *Read Matt 6:27-33.* We are called to pray. In the Lord's prayer, Jesus commands us to pray "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil (or the evil one)". If Jesus tells us to pray this, there is good reason to do so! *What other kinds of prayers should we be praying for one another? Commit to praying these prayers through the week for your group members.*
 - c. **THE ARMOUR OF GOD:** *Read Ephesians 6:10-20.* Take a moment to consider each piece of armour and what the picture means. *What things do you notice? How do we wear the armour?*



PRAY

Pray that we would be a church filled with gospel shaped people who live out our faith by grace alone! Pray that we would grow in our missional living and discipling of one another.

Ask God that he would lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil as a church. Pray over one another that we might have victory in Christ over sin and temptation.

NOTES

Acts 19:11–12 Using Paul’s “handkerchiefs and aprons” for healings and exorcisms is not magical because “God did [these] extraordinary miracles through Paul.” Similar healings occurred when people touched Jesus’ clothing (Mark 5:27–34; 6:56) or Peter’s shadow (Acts 5:15), God uses tangible objects to reveal his power and confirm his messengers. The failure of the sons of Sceva to drive out an evil spirit (vv. 13–16) shows that the power of God—not the use of magical incantations or objects—accomplishes these miracles.

Acts 19:13–14 There was a great deal of syncretism (combining magical practices with Jewish and pagan rituals) in Ephesus and Asia Minor. Jewish and pagan exorcists used whatever incantations or magical objects seemed to work. As the power of the gospel becomes known, these exorcists try to use the name of Jesus to cast out demons. The seven sons of Sceva were such syncretists.

Acts 19:14 chief priest. May mean (1) a pagan priest, (2) one having Jewish priestly ancestry, or (3) a bogus claim to Jewish priestly ancestry.

Acts 19:15 While acknowledging the authority of Jesus and his agent Paul, the demon recognizes that these are not Jesus’ authentic representatives and so they have no real power. Spiritual power does not reside in magical objects or spells but in Jesus himself. He is not a spiritual power we can manipulate, but the sovereign Lord whom we should worship and serve.

Acts 19:19 scrolls. Likely contained magic spells and formulas to ward off evil spirits and disease. Many such documents, known as the Magical Papyri, have been discovered in the sands of Egypt. **fifty thousand drachmas.** See NIV text note. A laborer earned about a drachma per day. Assuming \$10 per hour, or \$100 per day, this would be about \$5 million today.

Acts 19:20 spread widely and grew in power. This encapsulates the central theme of the book of Acts: the gospel’s progress is unstoppable.¹

Ephesians 6:10–20 *The Armor of God.* Paul concludes the exhortation section of the letter (chs. 4–6) by describing the spiritual battle against evil in the heavenly realms. This passage has three sections:

¹ Carson, D. A. (2015). [The Gospels and Acts](#). In D. A. Carson (Ed.), *NIV Zondervan Study Bible: Built on the Truth of Scripture and Centered on the Gospel Message* (pp. 2260–2261). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.



be strong in the Lord (vv. 10–13), stand firm with the armor (vv. 14–17), and pray constantly (vv. 18–20).

Ephesians 6:10 be strong. Relying not on our own inadequate strength but on God’s “mighty power” (cf. 1:19).

Ephesians 6:11 Put on. Recalls 4:24 (see note there), suggesting that putting on the “new self” is fundamentally the same as putting on God’s armor. **the full armor of God.** The means by which we are to “be strong in the Lord” (v. 10). Although the armor imagery might cause his Gentile readers to recall armor worn by Roman soldiers, Paul primarily draws on OT passages that describe the armor of Yahweh (Isa 59:17) and his Messiah (Isa 11:4–5). See note on Eph 6:13. **the devil’s schemes.** The devil is singled out as the primary enemy, the leader of the opposing army described in v. 12.

Ephesians 6:12 not against flesh and blood. The Christian life is a spiritual battle in which the ultimate opposition to the gospel stems from evil spiritual powers (cf. 1:21; 3:10 and notes). These powers can operate through humans (4:14, 27) and institutions, but they cannot be reduced solely to these manifestations. **rulers ... forces of evil.** These various terms show the diversity and comprehensiveness of the enemy’s power, reminding us that the battle cannot be fought merely with human resources.

Ephesians 6:13 full armor of God. We are able to stand only by putting on the full armor, which is comprised of the belt, breastplate, shoes, shield, helmet, and sword. These metaphorically represent truth, righteousness, the gospel, faith, salvation, and the word of God. Since the devil attacks individual believers and the corporate church (especially its unity), the armor represents resources that protect not only the individual but also the unity of the church. **stand.** Occurs four times in vv. 11–14. Christ has already won the decisive victory (1:20–22; 4:8; Col 2:15). Nevertheless, the consummation of cosmic harmony is still future. Paul does not call believers to invade the domain of evil; he calls them only to “stand,” maintaining what Christ has already won.

Ephesians 6:14 truth. Appropriate the truth of the gospel (1:13; 4:21) and be truthful with others (4:15, 25; 5:9). **righteousness.** Hold fast to God’s gift of justifying righteousness (Rom 3:22; 4:24; cf. Eph 1:7; 2:16), and do right and practice justice toward others (4:24; 5:9; 6:1).

Ephesians 6:15 readiness. Be ready for battle by appropriating the gospel, with its focus on peace vertically with God (2:1–10) and horizontally with other people (2:11–22).

Ephesians 6:16 shield. The Roman shield, made of wooden planks and covered with leather, could be soaked in water so as to extinguish flame-tipped arrows. **faith.** Trust steadfastly in God’s resources (1:19–20; 3:17), and hold firm to the community’s common set of beliefs (4:5, 13). See 1 Pet 5:8–9. **flaming arrows.** Examples include demonic attacks, temptations, and rage (4:26–27) that confront individuals, and false teachings and divisions that threaten the community’s unity.

Ephesians 6:17 salvation. Appropriate the salvation that God has already accomplished for believers in Christ (2:5–6). **sword of the Spirit.** A weapon for self-defense and offense. Its power and effectiveness come from the Spirit (Heb 4:12). **the word of God.** The gospel (1:13).



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Ephesians 6:18 pray. Prayer is not another piece of armor but is the way believers appropriate God's armor and stand firm. **in the Spirit.** Inspired and guided by the Spirit, who himself provides access to God (2:18).

Matthew 6:13 lead us not into temptation. God never tempts anyone (Jas 1:13); therefore, this probably means "Do not allow us to succumb to temptation." **the evil one.** Could also be translated "evil."²

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Developed with the help of the following:

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- Wright, Tom. 2010. *Acts*. For Everyone Bible Study Guides. IVP: Downers Grove.

² Carson, D. A. (2015). [The Gospels and Acts](#). In D. A. Carson (Ed.), *NIV Zondervan Study Bible: Built on the Truth of Scripture and Centered on the Gospel Message* (p. 1941). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.