

March 8, 2026 **Study Guide**

**Mission Possible – Acts 13–20**

**Passage: Acts 18:24–19:20**

**Theme: Seeing Clearly in the Mission of God**

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**Introduction: Seeing, But Not Clearly**

**Mark 8:22–26**

Jesus once healed a blind man in **two stages**. After the first touch, the man said:

“I see people, but they look like trees walking.”

Only after Jesus touched him again did he see clearly.

Sometimes our faith journey feels the same way. We believe in Jesus, yet parts of life and faith still feel **foggy**. We see—but not clearly.

In **Acts 18–19**, Luke tells three stories from the city of **Ephesus**. In each story, people know something about God but not the whole picture. Yet through it all, one truth becomes clear:

**Even when our understanding is foggy, God’s mission is never unclear to Him.**

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**Story #1 – A New Preacher**

**Acts 18:24–28**

Apollos arrives in Ephesus with an impressive spiritual résumé. He is eloquent, passionate, knowledgeable in the Scriptures, and bold in teaching about Jesus.

However, there is a gap in his understanding—he knows only **the baptism of John**. He understands repentance but has not fully grasped the freedom and grace found in the finished work of Christ.

Priscilla and Aquila privately explain the gospel more clearly to him. Apollos humbly receives their instruction and grows into an even more powerful teacher.

The key to Apollos’ effectiveness was not just his talent—it was his **teachable spirit**.

**Key Lesson**

God uses **teachable people** to accomplish His mission.

**Discussion Questions**

1. How does Luke describe Apollos’ strengths in Acts 18:24–25?
2. What does it mean that Apollos knew only the baptism of John?
3. Why do you think Priscilla and Aquila corrected him privately rather than publicly?
4. What does Apollos’ response reveal about humility and teachability?

5. Why is teachability essential for spiritual growth?
  6. Where might God be inviting you to grow in understanding?
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## Story #2 – A Continuing Pentecost

### Acts 19:1–10

When Paul returns to Ephesus, he encounters twelve disciples who have believed but have never even heard about the Holy Spirit.

They had experienced **John’s baptism**, but they had not yet fully understood the gospel message about Jesus and the gift of the Spirit.

After Paul explains the gospel more fully, they are baptized in the name of Jesus. Paul lays hands on them, and the Holy Spirit comes upon them with visible signs of tongues and prophecy.

This moment is not about creating two kinds of Christians or promoting a second baptism. Instead, it demonstrates the continuing spread of the Holy Spirit’s work that began at Pentecost.

Throughout Acts we see the Spirit expanding God’s mission:

- **Acts 2** – Jerusalem (Jews)
- **Acts 8** – Samaritans
- **Acts 10–11** – Gentiles
- **Acts 19** – The broader world (Ephesus)

God is fulfilling **Acts 1:8**—the gospel is reaching the ends of the earth.

### Key Lesson

God often works **outside the boundaries we try to place on Him**.

### Discussion Questions

1. What surprising response did Paul receive when he asked about the Holy Spirit?
  2. Why is it important that these disciples received a fuller understanding of the gospel?
  3. How does this event connect to Pentecost in Acts 2?
  4. What does this story reveal about the spread of the gospel beyond Jewish believers?
  5. Why do believers sometimes place “boxes” around what God can or cannot do?
  6. How can we remain open to the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives today?
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## Story #3 – Unparalleled Power

### Acts 19:11–20

God performs extraordinary miracles through Paul in Ephesus. Even cloths that touched him are used by God to heal people and drive out evil spirits.

Some itinerant Jewish exorcists attempt to imitate Paul by invoking the name of Jesus without actually knowing Him. The most famous example involves the **seven sons of Sceva**.

When they attempt to cast out a demon using Jesus' name, the spirit responds:

“Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?”

The demon-possessed man attacks them, and they flee wounded and naked.

This dramatic event spreads fear throughout the city, and many people turn to Christ. Those involved in magic publicly confess their practices and burn their scrolls—worth a huge amount of money.

This act of repentance leads to a powerful revival.

Luke concludes with a powerful summary:

**“So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily.” (Acts 19:20)**

### **Key Lesson**

The power of Jesus cannot be **borrowed or imitated—it must be personally known**.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. What kinds of miracles were happening through Paul in Ephesus?
2. Why did the sons of Sceva fail in their attempt to cast out demons?
3. What does this story reveal about the difference between religion and true faith?
4. Why was the public burning of magic scrolls such a powerful act of repentance?
5. What does this story teach us about the authority of Jesus over spiritual darkness?
6. How does Acts 19:20 summarize what God was doing in Ephesus?