

Having promised to return to Ephesus if God willed (18:21), chapter 19 records Paul returning to Ephesus about a year later for a two year stay. Verses 1-10 describe three aspects of Paul's ministry in Ephesus: his ministry among the disciples (vv1-7), the synagogue (v8), and the school of Tyrannus (vv9-10).

- I. His Ministry Among the Disciples (vv1-7)
- II. His Ministry Among the Synagogue (v8)
- III. His Ministry Among the School of Tyrannus (vv9-10)

I. His Ministry Among the Disciples (vv1-7)

1. I learned last week from 18:27, that Apollos had left Ephesus and traveled to Achaia, wherein we find Athens and Corinth.
2. According to 19:1, we learn that Apollos was away at Corinth, when Paul finally returned to Ephesus.
3. If you remember I mentioned last week, that beginning with 18:23, Paul left Antioch for his third missionary journey.
4. Thus, having passed through the upper regions, Galatia and Phrygia (18:23), he eventually came to Ephesus.
5. And it was there in Ephesus that he "found some disciples" which refers to some followers of Christ (from v7 we learn there were about 12 men in all).
6. These men were similar to Apollos in that they were true believers who lacked a fuller or complete understanding.
7. It also seems possible that some of these men would become elders of the newly formed church in Ephesus.
8. Gordon Keddie—"Most commentators regard them as pre-Pentecost believers in Christ—people who were truly trusting in Christ as their Savior but were as yet ignorant of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit."
9. (1) John's baptism (vv2-4), v2—"he said to the, 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?' So they said to him, 'We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.'"
10. Here we are expressly told they "believed" and yet, their understanding of the gospel was incomplete.
11. Seemingly, they had heard nothing about the Day of Pentecost and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit.
12. This doesn't necessarily mean they knew nothing about the Spirit, but that they had not yet heard He was given.
13. John Stott—"This cannot mean that they had never heard of the Spirit at all, for He is referred to many times in the OT, and John the Baptist spoke of the Messiah as baptizing people with the Spirit. It must rather mean that, although they had heard John's prophecy, they had not heard whether it had been fulfilled. They were ignorant of Pentecost."
14. V3—"And he said to them, 'Into what then were you baptized?' So they said, 'Into John's baptism'"—that is, they were likely baptized by the disciples of John the Baptist.
15. It's very unlikely they were baptized by John himself, as he had been beheaded twenty-five years before.

16. (2) Jesus' baptism (vv5-6), v5—"When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."
17. That is, after they heard what Paul said in v4, they were rebaptized in water "in the name of the Lord Jesus."
18. Now, because this is the only place in the book of Acts where someone is rebaptized other interpretations have been suggested.
19. But personally, it appears rather clear that they were baptized a second time as they heard what Paul said in v4—"When they heard this."
20. This simply means, that John's baptism was in some sense preparatory to the fuller revelation of the gospel.
21. Does this mean that every person baptized by John in the gospels had to be rebaptized in Jesus name.
22. No. There's no evidence of that in the gospels or in book of Acts—Acts 19:5 is the only place that it happens.
23. If you remember, we saw that week that Apollos was similar to these disciples and he never got rebaptized.
24. I think what we have in these disciples are, a group of men who's knowledge of Christ was less than Apollos.
25. And for that reason, they submit themselves to be rebaptized into Christ as He was more fully revealed to them.
26. V6—"And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied."
27. That is, they spoke with previously unknown languages special revelation from God which was a form of prophecy.
28. As the were ignorant of the Day of Pentecost, they received within this gift the outward assurance that they too had received the Spirit.
29. Now again, bear in mind, at this point we are in a highly transitional time, and so should be surprised by some unusual events.
30. Ordinarily now, every person receives the Spirit of Christ as the receive Christ, which is manifested in water baptism.

II. His Ministry Among the Synagogue (v8)

1. V8—"And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God."
2. As was his custom, Paul entered the synagogue and reasoned and sought to persuade them about the kingdom of God.
3. Now if we were to go back to previous chapters we would find Paul always reasoned from the Scriptures.
4. Acts 17:3 (Thessalonica)—"Paul reasoned from the Scriptures, explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, 'This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ.'"
5. Thus, the basic truth Paul sought to stress to those within Synagogues was the truth about Jesus from the OT.
6. But Luke tells us he preached "the things of the kingdom of God" which is another way of preaching Christ.

7. By "things of the kingdom" are meant those things that concern the kingdom—it's OT roots, it's NT fulfillment.
8. Thus, for three months he reasoned and sought to persuade them about the true nature of God's kingdom.
9. Remember, these were largely Jews who falsely understood that God's kingdom was carnal and external.
10. They were waiting for their Messiah to return to liberate them from Rome and reestablish an earthly kingdom in Jerusalem.

III. His Ministry Among the School of Tyrannus (vv9-10)

1. V9—"But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus.
2. As a result of teaching the Jews about the kingdom of God, some of them hardened their hearts and refused to believe.
3. The Greek word rendered "were hardened" (NKJV) literally means "to make hard" or "to become obstinate."
4. The point being—they hardened their hearts against the truth—they remained stubborn and refused to believe.
5. But not only this—"(they) spoke evil of the Way before the multitude" (the multitude of the Gentiles).
6. By "the Way" is meant "the way or ways of God"—this simply refers to the doctrine the apostles taught.
7. Thus, because they hardened themselves to the truth and began to speak evil against it, Paul withdrew from them.
8. V9—"Paul departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus."
9. Luke tells us nothing about who Tyrannus was—it seems likely he was a Greek scholar or philosopher.
10. It appears he was open to Paul reasoning with in his school daily, v10—"And this continued for two years."

IV. Lessons

1. In closing I want to return to the topic or subject of the kingdom of God and do some systematic theology.
2. The theme of God's kingdom on earth is laced throughout the entire NT Scriptures from Matthew to Revelation.
3. But I want to start by limiting our consideration to the book of Acts, wherein we find seven key references to the kingdom of God (or heaven).
4. Thus, I want to read through these rather quickly, and then suggest five things about the kingdom of God.
5. These are the things, I humbly suggest, that Paul taught the Jews that resulted in them hardening their hearts.

6. Acts 1:3—"To whom (apostles) He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God (Lk.24:21)."
7. Acts 8:12—"But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized."
8. Acts 14:22—"Strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, 'We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.'"
9. Acts 19:8—"And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God."
10. Acts 20:24-25—"But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more."
11. Acts 28:23—"So when they had appointed him a day, many came to him at his lodging, to whom he explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning till evening."
12. Acts 28:30-31—"Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him."
13. (1) Its roots—the roots of the kingdom of God have their origin or genesis in the OT and the nation of Israel.
14. In the specific sense Israel was a nation or kingdom ruled by God through earthly kings (both good and bad).
15. A kingdom has a king and citizens—the king rules over the people and the people submit to the king.
16. Thus, OT Israel was a kingdom—it was a nation that was ruled over by a king—first Saul and then David.
17. This doesn't deny that Israel was a kingdom prior to Saul; in fact, it was a kingdom when it became a distinct nation.
18. Ex.19:6—"And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation"—this happened after they were liberated from Egypt and became a distinct nation.
19. But it was under Saul and David that the kingdom of God (within Israel) had an earthly ruler or king.
20. And so by very definition, a kingdom has a definable citizenship, structure, and some form of government.
21. Old Testament Israel was a kingdom in that it had all three of these: its citizenship were the Hebrews, it had the laws of God as its structure (especially the temporary positive laws), and it had leaders.
22. Now, after Solomon the nation of Israel divided into two, and at that point became a divided kingdom.
23. And then, after both the Northern and Southern kingdoms were taken into captivity it ceased being a kingdom.
24. And then, after 70 years when a remnant returned, it reorganized as a distinct nation or as a kingdom.

25. And it basically continued as such until the NT era when it was largely taken over by the Roman Empire.
26. And yet, even then under the Roman Empire it remained as a distinct nation (and in this sense a kingdom).
27. But then we read in the OT, and especially in the prophet Daniel, that during the Roman Era a new King would be born.
28. And the kingdom of God on earth, would take a different form, and yet, it would remain as God's kingdom on earth.
29. Matt.21:43—"Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it."
30. What nation is Jesus referring to? What nation is He giving the kingdom to? Well, let us let Peter tell us.
31. 1Pet.2:4—"But you are a chosen generation, a kingdom of priests, a holy nation, His own special people."
32. 2Sam.7:12-13—"When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever."
33. Acts 2:30—"Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne."
34. Lk.1:31-33—"And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."
35. Thus, the NT kingdom relates to the OT kingdom in two ways: first, typically (OT Israel was a type or picture of the NT Israel), and organically (the NT King is literally the descendant of the OT king).
36. Matt.16:19—"And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."
37. By kingdom of heaven (God) is meant the kingdom of God in its outward form (as materialized in the local church) (Matt.18:18).
38. (2) Its nature—it's evident from these seven texts that the kingdom of God is tied to Christ and His gospel.
39. Simply put, by the kingdom of God is meant, the gracious rule of God in Christ among His beloved people.
40. Now again, this doesn't deny that Christ rules over heaven and earth—this refers to His kingdom of power.
41. But it simply asserts that He rules over both very differently (this allows us to speak of this world as the kingdom of darkness).
42. Thus, fundamental to the kingdom of God or the kingdom of Christ is Christ's rule within His NC people (church).
43. And so, this is a rule that concerns the heart, which manifests itself in the way we live within this world.
44. Lk.17:21—"The kingdom of God does not come with observation. For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you."

45. (3) Its entrance—here I want to answer the question—how is the kingdom of God entered? How do we become citizens?
46. Well stop and think about it—if this kingdom is within us, we enter it by coming to the king by faith.
47. Matt.4:17—"From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand (v23).'"
48. Matt.11:12—"And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force."
49. Matt.18:3—"Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven (Jn.3:5)."
50. Thus, we enter the kingdom of God by being born again, repenting of our sin and believing in Christ.
51. This is how we actually and saving enter the kingdom—we bow the knee and kiss the Son (or King).
52. And yet, we have to remember that while this kingdom is spiritual and inward there's a physical dimension.
53. Because we are physical and spiritual beings—there is an inward and outward aspect to this kingdom.
54. The outward and physical aspects of the kingdom takes place within the local church made of people.
55. Think of it like this—we speak of the universal and local church—you become a member of the universal church when you believe and you become a member of the local church when you are baptized.
56. Well, the same is true of the kingdom—you become a citizen of the kingdom when you believe and yet, you become a citizen of the outward kingdom when you are baptized.
57. Thus, it's within the outward and physical aspect of the church where we love and worship with each other.
58. WCF (26:2)—"The visible church, which is also catholic and universal under the gospel, not confined to one nation, as before under the law...and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation."
59. (4) Its privileges—simply put, those within the kingdom have a gracious king to protect and provide for them.
60. Matt.4:23—"And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom."
61. He preached the good news of the kingdom—a gracious kingdom ruled and protected by a gracious king.
62. (5) Its consummation, Acts 14:22—"We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God."
63. While we've live within the kingdom on earth, there's a sense in which we enter that kingdom when we die.
64. It's not that the kingdom in heaven is a different kingdom than that on earth—no, they are the same kingdom.
65. But the kingdom on earth is militant and the kingdom in heaven victorious—here we face trials and tribulations, there we lay our weapons down (and yet, there's a fuller expression of God's kingdom than that, and that's what we call the final state).