



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

Christ's Strategy to Reach All Asia Minor through Paul

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Pastor David Andersen / PO Box 2020, Chesterfield, VA 23832 / David.Andersen@capitolcom.org

Acts 19:8-10 *And he entered the synagogue and continued speaking out boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God. 9) But some were becoming hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the multitude, he withdrew from them and took away the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. 10) And this took place for two years, so that all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks. (NASB)*

CHRIST'S ENTIRE STRATEGY OF HIS COMMISSIONS IS ENCAPSULATED IN THESE THREE VERSES. THE COMMAND TO "DISCIPLE ALL THE NATIONS" (MT 28:19-20) IS OBEYED AS PAUL REACHES AND TEACHES FIRST HIS OWN NATION OF THE JEWS IN THE SYNAGOGUE WHICH HAD ITS ROOTS IN "JERUSALEM," THE CAPITAL, AND FILLED THE SURROUNDING REGION "ALL JUDEA," AND WAS TO EXPAND TO OTHER CAPITALS "SAMARIA," AND EVEN THE IMPERIAL CAPITAL OF ROME, "THE END OF THE EARTH" (ACTS 1:8). CHRIST'S STRATEGY ESPECIALLY INCLUDED LEADERS AS HE COMMISSIONED SAUL TO "BEAR MY NAME BEFORE GENTILES, KINGS AND THE SONS OF ISRAEL" (ACTS 9:15) THIS COMMISSION LED PAUL TO CAPITALS LIKE EPHEBUS, AND IS WHY HE PASSES ON TO THE CHURCH THE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER FOR "KINGS AND ALL WHO ARE IN AUTHORITY" (1 TIM 2:1-4). HERE CHRIST'S STRATEGY IS FULLY EMPLOYED AS PAUL SLOWS DOWN AND DELIBERATELY FULFILLS HIS AND EVERY OTHER COMMISSION OF CHRIST.

Why is Paul welcomed so long in this synagogue? Was the majority of the synagogue persuaded by Paul? Who are the "hardened" actually "disobedient" to? Who are "the multitude" receiving the evil speaking? Is the synagogue abandoned? Was this "school" a seminary? How was "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you" (Mt 28:20) fulfilled?

FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDIES:

- > FEBRUARY 21: ACTS 19:11-20 PAUL VERSES THE FAKES IN THE CAPITAL
- > APRIL 24-26: ACTS 19:21-29 LEADERS WHO RISKED THEIR LIVES WITH PAUL

Paul was strategic because his commission in Acts 9:15 including "kings." Knowing he would find the "kings" in the capital cities, every city he evangelized was either a capital or even more significant than a capital. Thus, he is in Ephesus, "the gem of Asia," the capital of Asia Minor. But this city was superior to the other capitals of Paul in similarity to the imperial capital of Rome. It had superior military protection for the Proconsul ruling the city and superior wealth with superior access by roads, rivers and by sea. Its official religion included the greatest wonder of the world, the largest and greatest marble temple of the world, the Temple of Diana. This temple was much larger than a football field, with its 127 sixty foot marble columns supporting a ceiling inlaid with rare gems and gold, covering an area of 200 by 425 feet. This goddess was so ancient that it was thought to have been dropped from heaven. Ephesus was a free city that held their own elections for their own magistrates. The postal route from this city reached every corner of the province of Asia Minor. It was where the merchants of the East met the merchants of the West. Even the city square was made of marble and they had their own three story library and mammoth outdoor theatre facing the harbor.

"IT WAS DURING THESE YEARS THAT THE CHURCHES OF THE LYCUS VALLEY—THOSE AT COLOSSAE, HIERAPOLIS AND LAODICEA WERE FOUNDED ... PERHAPS ALL THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA ADDRESSED IN THE REVELATION OF JOHN WERE FOUNDED ABOUT THIS TIME. THE PROVINCE WAS INTENSIVELY EVANGELIZED, AND BECAME ONE OF THE LEADING CENTRES OF CHRISTIANITY FOR CENTURIES AFTERWARDS." F. F. BRUCE

BIBLE STUDIES

THURSDAY @ 6:30 AM –PRAYER MEETING – GAB 6TH FLOOR SPEAKER'S CONFERENCE ROOM

THURSDAY @ 7:00 AM –BIBLE STUDY – GAB 6TH FLOOR SPEAKER'S CONFERENCE ROOM

Virginia

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I. THE SYNAGOGUE STRATEGY ACTS 19:8

When Paul went to a city, he would first look for the synagogue and minister the word of God to them. At times, when there was no synagogue (Philippi), he would meet with those down by the river praying. The Romans, prior to AD 70, would refer to those who attended the synagogue as, "the nation of the Jews in the city of Ephesus." Because they had been initially allied with the Romans as they first built their empire, the Jews were allowed to worship their own God and they were not required to worship the emperor, in contrast to all the Gentiles throughout the empire. Also the relatively few Gentile proselytes attending the synagogues were also allowed to worship the God of the Jews, rather than the emperor. After His resurrection Jesus taught His disciples to "disciple all the nations" (Mt 28:19), beginning in "Jerusalem" and spreading to "all Judea" and continuing that expansion throughout the capitals of the empire, "Samaria," until they reached the imperial capital of Rome, "the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). So Paul strategically began by winning the Jews in the synagogues throughout the capitals of the empire. The Jews in this synagogue had asked Paul to return, so he was able to boldly preach and teach over three months "about the kingdom of God."

"HE TOOK THE OLD TESTAMENT, SHOWED WHAT GOD HAD SAID HIS MESSIAH WOULD DO, AND THEN TOLD HOW JESUS HAD DONE IT." JAMES MONTGOMERY BOICE

II. THE SCHOOL STRATEGY ACTS 19:9

Paul's three month series in the synagogue was very persuasive and it seems that most of the Jews turned to their Messiah, Jesus Christ, to forgive their sin and give them His perfect righteousness before God for all eternity. Though "the multitude" in the synagogue must have believed, "some were becoming hardened and disobedient." In spite of the obvious truth of their own Scripture being presented to them, they foolishly

hardened their heart against God and disobeyed Him and His Word, refusing to submit to Jesus Christ as Lord. The longer they put it off, the more hardened they became, until truth didn't matter because their minds were rejecting God and His truth. These then sided with Satan against the believers and began to slander the Christians, "speaking evil of the Way before the multitude." Initially, Christianity was called "the Way," because of the powerful words of Jesus in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." Paul "withdrew from them" as he had in Corinth (Acts 18:6-7), and abandoned these few Jews and their synagogue. Thus, having separated the disciples, Paul was obedient to Christ in "teaching them all things that I have commanded you" by "reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus." The Western Text tells the precise time that Paul taught in the school was from 11AM to 4 PM. This is the second church based seminary taught by Paul.

"HIS STRATEGY WAS TO EVANGELIZE THE HINTERLAND THROUGH PEOPLE HE HAD BROUGHT TO CHRIST AND TRAINED FOR SERVICE." EVERETT HARRISON

III. THE SEAT OF AUTHORITY STRATEGY ACTS 19:10

If the timing of the Codex Bezae is correct, then Paul taught about 5 hours a day. If he taught seven days a week for two years, then his students could have acquired up to 3,640 hours of teaching, more than enough to be prepared to plant and lead churches in the surrounding areas of Asia Minor. It is also possible that he taught some for a time and sent them out while teaching others on a rotation basis. Because he was in the capital, many from the surrounding areas would come to him when they needed to arrive at the capitol. Most importantly, Paul seems to have won several leaders in this capital, the "officials of Asia, who were his friends" (Acts 19:31), who would have probably helped him evangelize as well.

Questions to Ponder:

- 1) Are you being obedient to the command of Christ in the Great Commission to "disciple all the nations"?
- 2) Is your heart being hardened by hearing but not obeying the truth of Scripture or are you teaching it to others?
- 3) Are you an official who is a strategic witness for Christ both in the capitol and in the communities you represent?