

Series: **COLLISION COURSE**. Session One: **CHRIST COLLIDES WITH WRONG RELIGION**. Text: **ACTS 19:1-7**

INTRODUCTION. This series focuses on one chapter in the book of Acts. Over the next 4 weeks, we will identify beliefs and practices that collide with the truth about Jesus. When the gospel comes into a city called Ephesus, we will see how it challenges: wrong religion, the spirit world, profit margins, and popular culture. We will discover how these things are going a different direction than Jesus, resulting in a collision where Christ challenges our world

DISCUSSION. Is the word religion a positive or negative one in our culture? How about to you? What is it about religion that can be positive or negative?

EXAMINATION. Vv.1-2 Several inscriptions refer to Ephesus as “the first & greatest metropolis of Asia.” With a population of 250,000, it was also one of the largest. The apostle Paul arrived, looking to spread the gospel. He found a group of who claimed to be disciples. Although they said they believed, something wasn’t quite right about them. What types of things might Paul have seen or not seen that would cause him to ask the question?

Consider Romans 8:12-16 and Ephesians 1:13-14 (which was written to the church in Ephesus!). What do these passages tell us about the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer?

Vv.3-4 Paul discovers that this group didn’t have all of the message. Read John 1:19-34 and determine what these men must have known if they followed John. What part of the good news were they missing?

Consider what Jesus says about John in Luke 7:28.

What was the difference between John’s baptism and the baptism that Jesus calls his followers to experience?

Vv.5-7 Even though these men had previously characterized themselves as disciples, they clearly had been mistaken. Now, when they believed, they received the Holy Spirit who was absent before their trust was in the risen Jesus.

Read the other instances when the Spirit came separate from belief in Christ: Acts 2:1-4; 8:12-17; 10:44-48.

In reference to this, Dr John Stott writes: *“The norm of Christian experience is a cluster of four things: repentance, faith in Jesus, water baptism, and the gift of the Spirit. Though the perceived order may vary a little, the four belong together...The tongue-*

speaking and prophesying were special to Ephesus, as to Samaria, in order to demonstrate visibly and publicly that particular groups were incorporated into Christ by the Spirit; the New Testament does not universalize them. There are no Samaritans or disciples of John the Baptist left in the world today.”

APPLICATION. From this text we can state this truth:

WHEN JESUS IS THE CENTER, WE KNOW THE SPIRIT’S POWER.

What does religion without the Holy Spirit look like?

What does life with the power of the Holy Spirit look like?

The Bible teaches that those who belong to Christ have the Holy Spirit, and yet we need to keep on being filled with the Spirit. What happens that causes us to need that, and what do we do to receive it?

In what way do we keep Jesus at the center of our lives and our church?

“Belief releases the ever-fresh power of the Holy Spirit within us....When there is no power, no joy, no grace—we are not believing in Christ.” Dr Kent Hughes