

The Gospel Comes to Ephesus

1. How would you like to see the power of God revealed in your Christian community?

Within six months of his return to Antioch Paul was compelled to set off on a third missionary journey as soon as the weather was agreeable for travel. On Map 6 attached trace the course we will take with Paul through the following cities and provinces as far as Ephesus.

Antioch	Macedonia	Troas	Samos	Patara	Caesarea
Galatia	Greece/Achaia	Assos	Miletus	Cyprus	Jerusalem
Phrygia	Macedonia	Mitylene	Cos	Tyre	
Ephesus	Philippi	Chios	Rhodes	Ptolemais	

Bow in Prayer: “Lord, it has been thrilling to witness the miracle of ‘changed lives’ as we have journeyed with Paul and his companions. Will You stir up the passion in our hearts for those who desperately need to hear the ‘Good News’ in our community?”

Paul visited Ephesus on his second missionary journey (18:19-21) but his stay was very brief. He left Priscilla and Aquila behind to carry on the witness in the synagogue.

2. We pick up the story in Acts 18:23-19:41. **Read** and carefully observe this section. Write down any questions you would like to have answered as we study this interesting passage.
3. As Paul set out on his way to Ephesus what priority motivated his travel over the next several months (Acts 18:23)?

While Paul was slowly making his way through Asia Minor, the narrative shifts.

4. Who is introduced and how is he portrayed by Luke (18:24-25)?

Imagine the surprise of Aquila and Priscilla one Sabbath after hearing a visiting Jewish teacher who had a great passion for Christ!

5. How was his ministry affected by his relationship with Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:25c-26)? What had been missing in Apollos’ message?

6. Why might Apollos want to move on to Corinth in Achaia? Support your answer.

While Apollos was preaching in Corinth, Paul arrived back in Ephesus and was immediately faced with a unique situation. **Review** Acts 19:1-7.

7. What was so unusual about these circumstances? How many years had passed since John the Baptist had announced the coming of Jesus? Of what events were these men unaware?
8. What is the difference between the baptism of John and baptism in the name of Jesus?
9. What do you learn in this passage about the relationship between faith in Jesus and receiving the Holy Spirit? (Compare Romans 8:9b)

This is the only situation we find in the New Testament of a group of people who are aware of Jesus only through John the Baptist's teaching. In the gracious providence of God, however, they gain the opportunity to hear the complete story and enter into a relationship with the Spirit of God.

And here we find the final "echo of Pentecost," the last mention of the phenomenon of tongues in Acts.

Paul's Amazing Ministry in Ephesus

10. Prayerfully **read** Acts 19:8-22. **Read** "The Setting at Ephesus" for additional background.

Life Lesson

Paul was making good on a promise. He had paid an earlier visit to this same synagogue at the end of his second missionary journey (18:19-21) and found a receptive group of Jews. He vowed to return at the first opportunity.

11. Our words should be more than well meaning sentiments—we need to keep track of the promises we make. *How reliable are your words? Do you follow through on the promises you make?* Note below any promises you have made where you still need to follow through. Then write out a plan to keep these promises.

12. What precisely did Paul do in the Ephesian synagogue (19:8)? Consult several translations.

A finely trained mind is a powerful tool when used for the glory of God. The Greek word for “reasoning,” (NASB) (*dialeghomenos*) suggests debate and forceful, logical analysis of his position.

As the recognized rabbi, Paul addressed the Ephesians as a group and perhaps occasionally one-on-one, and forcefully engaged their minds and hearts with the Gospel and its claims.

13. As time went on, how does Luke describe the heart attitude of some of the hearers towards Paul’s message? What price did Paul pay for his faithfulness to the Gospel (verse 9)? Consider 2 Timothy 3:12-13.

14. When opposition grew to such proportions that Paul felt he could no longer attend the synagogue, how did Paul continue his ministry (Acts 19:9b)?

15. How would you characterize Paul’s Ephesian ministry during the next two years (Acts 19:10-12)?

Note: During this time spiritually hungry Asians must have traveled to Ephesus to hear Paul speak. “Throughout Asia” would include the area where the seven churches in the book of Revelation are located. As Peter had before him (Acts 5:15-16), Paul was able to perform unusual authenticating signs and wonders. These demonstrated the truthfulness of his message and established his apostolic authority.

16. a. As a result of what God was doing, what counterfeit activity began (Acts 19:13-16)?

b. How was the counterfeit exposed and its work stopped (19:17-20)?

c. How did this episode affect the surrounding areas (verse 20)?

The Riot in Ephesus

In the great cosmic conflict for the souls of men, every intrusion of good is met by the fierce resistance of evil. Such was the case in Ephesus. **Reread** Acts 19:23-41 aloud with expression.

17. Why did Demetrius rally the people of Ephesus against Paul? What was the stated reason and the real reason for the opposition?

18. A full-fledged riot developed. What does this event reveal about the people involved?

The craftsman

Alexander

Paul

The crowd

Jews

The city clerk

19. How did Roman law protect Paul in this situation?

20. What do we learn about mob psychology from this riot?

21. How was order finally restored?

22. There are enormous lessons for us in this passage. Scan through the text again and make a mental note of all the incidents where you have seen God's power revealed! What is the Spirit of God showing you that is applicable to your life right now?

This week ask God for the courage to go against the flow in living out the truth!

Bev Horn

Map 6



The Setting at Ephesus

Acts 18:23-19:41 - Lesson 17

Ephesus was a magnificent city situated near the Mediterranean Sea. Numerous inscriptions refer to Ephesus as “the first and greatest metropolis of Asia.” At the time of Paul, Ephesus ranked with Rome in Italy, Corinth in Greece, Antioch in Syria and Alexandria in Egypt as one of the foremost cities of the Roman Empire—with a population of about 250,000. As the Romans built their famous network of roads throughout the province, they numbered their milestone markers from Ephesus. One ancient writer calls Ephesus “the greatest commercial center in Asia this side of the Taurus River.” Another speaks of Ephesus as the most prosperous commercial center of the time, controlling the financial affairs of western Asia Minor. Wide avenues, huge public buildings and squares, and luxurious private homes were designed to impress tourists.

The most significant feature of the city was its temple to the goddess Artemis, the fertility goddess. The Temple of Artemis was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Ephesus was also a center of pagan magic and many types of magical arts were practiced there. Idol worship and magic arts were big business in Ephesus. Many people made their living with things related to these practices.

The apostle Paul ministered in Ephesus for 3 years—the longest time he spent in any ministry city that Luke records. This most likely was from the fall of 54 AD to the fall of 57 AD. Paul’s ministry in Ephesus was marked by a powerful movement of God’s Spirit. It was probably during this period that the seven churches of Revelation were established as well as others. God worked mightily through Paul during his years in Ephesus and the city rapidly became the leading center of the Christian world.

Paul penned the first letter to the Corinthians near the end of this stay in Ephesus.