

CONCERNING THE WAY

May 4, 2010

LESSON 100: THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES



Chapter 18

Sometime during the time Paul was in Athens, Silas and Timothy joined him from Berea (1 Thessalonians 3:1). Then the missionaries split up again. Silas left to strengthen the church in Philippi (verse 5), and Timothy goes back to Thessalonica (1 Thessalonians 3:2). Paul goes to Corinth alone:

Acts 18:1-3 After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. (2) There he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla because Claudius had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to visit them, (3) and because they had the same trade he stayed with them. They worked together because they were tentmakers by trade.

Corinth was the capital city of the province of Achaia and the seat of the Roman proconsul. It was located 55 miles west of Athens. Corinth was a major rival to Athens and was the largest city in Greece at the time, and one of the great commercial centers of ancient Europe. Pontus was a region in the northeastern part of Asia Minor.

Corinth was also known as one of the foulest, least moral cities in the world. The term “to corinthianize”, meant to fornicate, and a “Corinthian girl” was a euphemism for a prostitute. It’s not a surprise that Aphrodite, goddess of love, was the most favored deity in Corinth. One thousand prostitutes worked in Aphrodite’s temple on top of the Acrocorinth, a 1,900 foot mountain. The population of Corinth at the time Paul was there is estimated to be about half a million, including a sizeable Jewish community.

Claudius was the Roman emperor Tiberius Claudius Nero Germanicus, known as Claudius, who ruled from A.D. 41-54. The edict expelling the Jews from Rome was issued in A.D. 49

Paul supported himself by making tents - that was the trade he would have learned while he was a rabbinical student. The tents were probably made from leather and goat hair. Typically a home of a tradesman would have the working area on the ground floor, and the living area would be on the second floor. Paul, being alone, needed to find a way to make some money, and he probably looked for the tentmaker’s guild, which led him to two fellow Jewish Christians – Aquila and Priscilla.

We don’t know how they came to Christ, but had apparently been believers for some time. Aquila offered Paul the hospitality of his home and the opportunity to work together. Paul became lifelong friends with these two, and they are mentioned in three of his letters (Romans 16:3, 1 Corinthians 16:19, 2 Timothy 4:19).

Acts 18:4-5 Every Sabbath he would speak in the synagogue, trying to persuade both Jews and Greeks. (5) But when Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself entirely to the word as he emphatically assured the Jews that Jesus is the Messiah.

At this point Paul apparently began to work less at tent making and preach more. Silas and Timothy come back, apparently bringing an offering from the church in Macedonia, and so Paul could devote himself to preaching the Word instead of working to earn money. Timothy also had an encouraging report from the church at Thessalonica (1 Thessalonians 3:6-10), although they needed a little clarification from Paul about the timing of the rapture of the church and the return of Jesus (1 Thess. 4:13 – 5:11). After getting this report from Timothy, Paul wrote his first letter to the Thessalonians.

Acts 18:6 But when they began to oppose him and insult him, he shook out his clothes in protest and told them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent. From now on I will go to the gentiles."

As we saw back in Acts 13:51, shaking the dust off your clothes was a symbolic thing to a Jew, meaning, "I am through with you! You are accountable to God." He was saying he was not responsible for what would happen to them. Again Paul says he will go the Gentiles. This doesn't mean he's giving up on his brother Jews – he will still go to synagogues and preach when he can, but his main focus will be the Gentiles.

Acts 18:7-8 Then he left that place and went to the home of a man named Titius Justus, who worshiped God and whose house was next door to the synagogue. (8) Now Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord, along with his whole family. Many Corinthians who heard Paul also believed and were baptized.

Justus is apparently a Gentile, since it says he "worshipped God". Just as Paul says he is through with the Jews and will turn to the Gentiles, the leader of the synagogue and his whole family becomes a believer. You can imagine the impact that had on the synagogue!

Acts 18:9-11 One night the Lord said to Paul in a vision, "Stop being afraid to speak out! Don't remain silent! (10) For I am with you, and no one will lay a hand on you or harm you, because I have many people in this city." (11) So Paul lived there for a year and a half and continued to teach the word of God among the people there.

You get the feeling that Paul was growing tired and discouraged by this point, after all the rejections by his people. So Jesus speaks to him in a dream to encourage him to keep on speaking out. Jesus told him He had "many people in this city". Most of them had not yet believed in Christ, but God was preparing the hearts of people He knew who would come to Him during Paul's 18 months there. We see His sovereignty at work.

Acts 18:12-13 While Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews gathered together, attacked Paul, and brought him before the judge's seat. (13) They said, "This man is persuading people to worship God in ways that are contrary to the law."

Gallio was proconsul of Achaia from A.D. 51-52. This date is one of the firmly established dates in Acts, being found on an inscription about Gallio's term. Lucius Junius Gallio was the son of the rhetorician Seneca and the brother of Seneca the philosopher. So the event mentioned here is probably to be dated July-October A.D. 51. Gallio was executed in A.D. 65 after falling out of favor with the Emperor Nero.

What are the Jews accusing Paul of here? Judaism was a religion sanctioned by the Roman Empire, but Christianity was not. So they were saying he's teaching an illegal religion. Jews worshipped God according to the Mosaic Law, but Paul was teaching worship of God that was not according to the Law. Gallio doesn't see it that way, thinking it was just an offshoot of Judaism:

Acts 18:14-16 Paul was about to speak when Gallio admonished the Jews, "If there were some misdemeanor or crime involved, it would be reasonable to put up with you Jews. (15) But since it is a question about words, names, and your own law, you will have to take care of that yourselves. I refuse to be a judge in these matters." (16) So he drove them away from the judge's seat.

Gallio tells them to settle their religious squabbles themselves, he was not going to get involved in it. This was important to the spread of the gospel, because Paul would remain free to keep preaching. Gallio could have imprisoned him or had him executed.

Acts 18:17 Then all of them took Sosthenes, the synagogue leader, and began beating him in front of the judge's seat. But Gallio paid no attention to any of this.

Blaming him for allowing Paul to speak, the Jews take the leader of the synagogue and beat him up right there in front of Gallio! This was either a different synagogue from the one Crispus led in verse 8, or this is the man that replaced Crispus after he became a believer. This is similar to the way Pilate dealt with Jesus. In the end, he let the Jewish leadership and people make the judgment against Jesus. It looks like Sosthenes eventually became a Christian also, as he is mentioned by Paul in 1 Corinthians 1:1.

Acts 18:18 After staying there for quite a while longer, Paul said goodbye to the brothers and sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila. In Cenchraea he had his hair cut, since he was under a vow.

With the church flourishing and the Jewish opposition quieting down, Paul left Corinth and sailed for Antioch. At some point while he was in Corinth, Paul made a Jewish vow. We're not given the details, but most think this was a Nazirite vow, which was setting yourself aside for a special work of God (Numbers 6:1-21). Usually they would let their hair grow long and not cut it as a sign they were under this vow. At the end of the period of time (usually at least 30 days), Paul shaved his head – that's what the meaning of the Greek is (also see Acts 21:24). Normally the hair would be collected and burned along with offerings in the temple at Jerusalem, so we don't know if Paul did that or not.

Some have a problem with Paul doing this, because they think that he is obeying the Law, which contradicts what Paul has been teaching. But Paul never stopped observing Jewish customs, and that's what this was. He was under no obligation to do it, and did not do it to gain favor with God, but apparently thought it would help prepare him for the next stage of his ministry.

Acts 18:19-21 When they arrived in Ephesus, he left Priscilla and Aquila there. Then he went into the synagogue and had a discussion with the Jews. (20) They asked him to stay longer, but he refused. (21) As he told them goodbye, he said, "I will come back to you again if it is God's will." Then he set sail from Ephesus.

Paul has not given up on the Jews – he still goes straight to a synagogue in Ephesus and has a discussion with them, which means he reasoned from the scriptures that Jesus was Messiah. He doesn't stay long in Ephesus this time, but will come back on his next journey in about a year, and he leaves Priscilla and Aquila there. The phrase "if it is God's will" may be something you hear often, but we get this from the Jews. It is a common Jewish expression that we should still say today. It expresses the fact that I can make my plans, but ultimately God is in control of every plan that man makes.

Ephesus was an influential city in Asia Minor. It was the location of the famous temple of Artemis. In 334 B.C. control of the city was given to Alexander the Great, who contributed a large sum of money to the building of a new and more elaborate temple of Artemis, which became one of the seven wonders of the ancient world and lasted until destroyed by the Goths in A.D. 263. This major port city would be reached from Corinth by ship. It was 250 miles east of Corinth by sea.

Paul probably refused to stay because he wanted to reach Jerusalem for the festival season before the seas became impassable during the winter. So Priscilla and Aquila stay in Ephesus, and evidently Silas and Timothy remained in Macedonia and Achaia to oversee the churches there.

Acts 18:22-23 When he arrived in Caesarea, he went up to Jerusalem, greeted the church there, and then returned to Antioch. (23) After spending some time there, he departed and went from place to place through the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.

This is the end of Paul's 2nd missionary journey. He had covered over 300 miles. Verse 23 is the start of Paul's 3rd missionary journey, and would have been the spring of A.D. 53. Paul's plan was always to preach the gospel in a town, start some small church groups in homes, leave, and then come back to encourage and teach them some more. Luke doesn't give us much detail about the first part of Paul's journey, but he had already established churches in these areas. So Paul spends the first few months of this journey visiting the churches he had already started, but his goal is to eventually reach Ephesus, where he had promised to come back.

Acts 18:24-25 Meanwhile, a Jew named Apollos arrived in Ephesus. He was a native of Alexandria, an eloquent man, and well versed in the Scriptures. (25) He had been instructed in the Lord's way, and with spiritual fervor he kept speaking and teaching accurately about Jesus, although he knew only about John's baptism.

We're introduced to someone new here – Apollos, who was apparently a great speaker and knew the scriptures very well. He had been taught the way of Jesus, and knew enough to speak and teach accurately about Him, but he really knew nothing beyond Jesus' earthly ministry. He didn't understand His crucifixion or resurrection. John's baptism symbolized cleansing by God because of repentance toward God. But Christian baptism pictures union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection by means of Spirit baptism (Romans 6:3-10; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27; Colossians 2:12).

This story reminds us again that Acts is about a time of transitions. Apollos had evidently not received Christian baptism and probably had not received the Holy Spirit.

What took place in verses 24-28 occurred after Paul left Ephesus (v. 21) and before he returned (19:1). During this time a church had been started, probably under the influence of Aquila and Priscilla. Then came Apollos from Alexandria in northern Africa.

Acts 18:26 He began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him home and explained God's way to him more accurately.

Priscilla and Aquila, who were already there in Ephesus since Paul came through the last time, completed Apollos' training by explaining to him the meaning of Christ's death and resurrection. That was all he lacked, and now he was ready to go! This tells us that it is not sufficient to simply believe in Jesus as Messiah, but it's what we believe about Jesus that makes all the difference. His death, burial, and resurrection also must be accepted along with an understanding of the meaning of those events.

Acts 18:27-28 When Apollos wanted to cross over to Achaia, the brothers wrote to the disciples there, urging them to welcome him. On his arrival he greatly helped those who, through God's grace, had believed. (28) He successfully refuted the Jews in public and proved by the Scriptures that Jesus is the Messiah.

This phrase "those who, through God's grace, had believed", is unique in the New Testament, and shows that is how people come to believe. It's totally through the grace of God.

So Apollos, now armed not only with the ability to prove that Jesus was the Messiah that had been prophesied from the scriptures, but he could also explain the meaning of His death and the truth of His resurrection. He was an unstoppable force! He was probably a much better speaker than Paul, and had great success in debating the Jews. He was so popular that some divisive believers at Corinth aligned themselves with Apollos over Paul (1 Corinthians 1:12).

Thank God for people like Apollos who are willing to stand up and debate with unbelievers the truth of Jesus Christ. Most of us are either unwilling or incapable of doing that. Some believe Apollos is the one who wrote the book of Hebrews. Considering how he is spoken of here and how brilliant the book of Hebrews is, I think that is very possible.

Chapter 19

In chapter 19 we continue Paul's 3rd missionary journey, starting with him arriving in Ephesus, which would be his base of operations for the next 2 to 3 years.

Acts 19:1-4 It was while Apollos was in Corinth that Paul passed through the inland districts and came to Ephesus. He found a few disciples there (2) and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They answered him, "No, we haven't even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." (3) He then asked, "Then into what were you baptized?" They answered, "Into John's baptism." (4) Then Paul said, "John baptized when they repented, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, in Jesus."

Paul found these guys who were apparently disciples of John the Baptist, but had not heard the entire gospel. They must have left Israel before Jesus' death and resurrection and had heard nothing of Pentecost. They had believed in Jesus Christ as Messiah, but had not been taught about the Holy Spirit. They had only been "baptized into repentance", which was the baptism that John the Baptist performed. This was a changing of the mind and accepting the fact that the Messiah, the King was here. Like Apollos, they didn't really understand the crucifixion or the resurrection. So Paul gave them the rest of the story.

Notice what Paul asked them. This is a correct translation, some of them, like the King James, get it wrong. "Did you receive the Holy Spirit WHEN you believed?" This is Paul's expectation of what is normal, that a person receives the Spirit when they first believe.

Acts 19:5-7 On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. (6) When Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began to speak in tongues and to prophesy. (7) There were about twelve men in all.

This is the only place in the New Testament that refers to anyone being rebaptized. It may have happened with others who had been baptized under John the Baptist's ministry, and then when they

were taught the entire truth about Jesus and received the Holy Spirit, they would be baptized again as a symbol of their identification with Christ's death and resurrection.

Well, charismatics use this verse to say that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is delayed, a second work of blessing after salvation. Wrong! Remember that Acts is a transitional book – these are unique events that will not necessarily be repeated. This is an abnormal situation here where these people had not heard the message of the work of Christ on the cross, or of the Holy Spirit. That's the only reason they hadn't been indwelt by the Spirit yet. Now that they understand what the crucifixion and resurrection are all about, and believe in this new revelation, then the Holy Spirit comes upon them.

The normal way of salvation is that we receive the Holy Spirit at the moment we trust Christ for salvation. We are not baptized into the Holy Spirit, but baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ. The transitional Book of Acts is not to be used as a doctrinal source on how to receive the Holy Spirit.

And they speak in tongues, which was not some kind of ecstatic prayer language, but a real earthly language that they had not known previously. We've seen that when this happens, it is in a place where there is a mixture of people of different races and tongues. That's the case here. There could have been people that spoke and understood different languages here, and that's why they spoke in tongues, so that all the people present could understand what was happening. It was a sign, a confirmation of the coming of the Holy Spirit, and that these men had truly become believers. And as we've said before, this prophesying was not necessarily foretelling the future, but a gift allowing them to teach and explain doctrinal truth, revelation from God. This is the 3rd and last mention of the manifestation of "tongues" in Acts.

As further proof that everyone is baptized by the Holy Spirit when they are saved, look at 1 Corinthians 12. Corinth was the most carnal church in the Bible. Those that believe in a so-called 2nd blessing would have to assume that there were some people in that church who had not received the Holy Spirit, or been "sanctified" yet. But look at what Paul says:

1 Corinthians 12:12-13 For just as the body is one and yet has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, form a single body, so it is with the Messiah. (13) For by one Spirit all of us — Jews and Greeks, slaves and free — were baptized into one body and were all privileged to drink from one Spirit.

By one Spirit "all of us" were baptized into one body. All means all. Paul understood that all the believers at Corinth had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This is a sovereign act of God. You don't ask for the baptism, and you don't ask for the gift of tongues, it is given as the Spirit wills (1 Corinthians 12:11,18). And Paul says in Romans 8:9 that if you don't have the Holy Spirit, you are not a Christian.

Acts 19:8-10 He went into the synagogue and spoke there boldly for three months, holding discussions and persuading those who heard him about the kingdom of God. (9) But when some people became stubborn, refused to believe, and slandered the Way in front of the people, Paul left them, took his disciples away with, and held daily discussions in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. (10) This went on for two years, so that all who lived in Asia, Jews and Greeks alike, heard the word of the Lord.

Wow, three months at a synagogue without causing a riot must have been a record for Paul! Paul

was preaching about the kingdom of God, explaining that Jesus was the King and He was now in heaven at the right hand the Father, waiting until the Father subdues all His enemies, then He will come back and establish the Kingdom. The Jews may have been somewhat receptive to the idea that Jesus was the Messiah because of both Apollos and Paul's effective arguments, but after three months they had apparently heard enough.

The "lecture hall" was a place where teachers and pupils met. It must have been in the home of Tyrannus, who apparently was a philosopher/teacher who had come to faith in Christ. Paul decided to stop preaching in the synagogue and go to this place to continue having "discussions" about the gospel. Paul stayed here in Ephesus for over two years, and had a huge impact on the entire province of Asia – they ALL heard the word of the Lord.

During this time the churches at Colosse, Laodicea, and Hierapolis were founded (Col. 4:13). Some believe all seven churches of Revelation 2-3 were started at this time, but we don't know for sure. According to firm testimony of the early Christians, the Apostle John later became the chief bishop of Ephesus, and the first of the seven letters sent through him by Christ to the churches was directed to the church at Ephesus (Revelation 2:1-7).

Acts 19:11-12 God continued to do extraordinary miracles through Paul. (12) When handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched his skin were taken to the sick, their diseases left them and evil spirits went out of them.

Why would God perform healings like this? Ephesus was a focal point for magicians and wandering pagan priests. The city was filled with wizards trying to exercise power over the dark forces. God may have used these strange methods to show that His miraculous power was greater than the powers of darkness. Paul apparently didn't have these powers at other times, but only here in Ephesus.

You still have some TV and radio preachers who try to do things like this, offering, for your generous donation of course, a handkerchief blessed by the preacher himself. God did this through Paul and Paul alone so that people who received these items and witnessed the miracles would know that God was with this man. Well, there were no more apostles like Paul and the other original 12. Even Paul was not able to just heal people any time he liked (2 Corinthians 12:8, Philemon 2:27, 1 Timothy 5:23, 2 Timothy 4:20). Today the miracle that we have that is a testimony to God's plan is the Bible, His completed revelation. There is no Biblical basis for anyone to try to repeat miracles like this today. "Miracle hankies" are no longer necessary.

Acts 19:13-17 Then some Jews who went around trying to drive out demons attempted to use the name of the Lord Jesus on those who had evil spirits, saying, "I command you by that Jesus whom Paul preaches!" (14) Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this. (15) But the evil spirit said to them, "Jesus I know, and I am getting acquainted with Paul, but who are you?" (16) Then the man with the evil spirit jumped on them, got the better of them, and so violently overpowered all of them that they fled out of the house naked and bruised. (17) When this became known to everyone living in Ephesus, Jews and Greeks alike, they all became terrified, and the name of the Lord Jesus began to be held in high honor.

This is kind of a funny incident, but it is also very serious. One of the themes of Acts is the victory of Christ over occultism (Acts 8:9-24; 13:6-12; 16:16-18). This is another example of His power over demons.

Paul's reputation as a miracle-worker was growing so much that it was inevitable that some pretenders would come around, probably seeking a profit. They must have thought that the name of Jesus was some kind of magic talisman that Paul was using, and they could do it, too. We don't know if these guys were real exorcists or not, but they didn't have Jesus working through them like Paul did, and it probably scared the dickens out of them when the evil spirit actually spoke back to them! After this one man beat up all seven of these guys, I bet they never tried this again. The lesson of this story is that to use the name of Jesus effectively in exorcism one must be totally devoted to Him.

It's interesting the Greek terms for "know" here. "Jesus I know (ginōskō, "to know by interaction and experience")" and "Paul I know about (epistamai, "to know about, to understand"). But the demon did not know Sceva's sons. Demon possession is real, and it is increasing today around the world, even in our country. It is nothing to take lightly. You can see how this demon gave this one man power to subdue seven men! By the way, demons can also speak in tongues, there are many reports of this.

Acts 19:18-20 Many who became believers kept coming to confess and talk about what they had been doing. (19) Moreover, many people who had practiced occult arts gathered their books and burned them in front of everybody. They estimated their value and found them to have been worth 50,000 silver coins. (20) In that way the word of the Lord kept spreading and triumphing.

Many of the people there that had become believers continued to practice sorcery. This incident with Paul convicted them about how dangerous these occult practices were, and they stopped doing them and got rid of all their spell books and other occultic items. Ephesus was a major pagan religious center with a lot of "magical" practices. In sorcery, people by the assistance of demons tried to gain power over others. This amount of money would be about a million dollars today.

Many people are involved in the occult today, and most think it's just for fun. They collect occultic trinkets, play occultic games, read occult literature, etc. There are even Christians who do these things, and they think it's harmless. It is not a game! Demons and sorcery are real and are very dangerous. Do not play around with anything which is related to the occult!

Acts 19:21-22 After these things had happened, Paul decided to go through Macedonia and Achaia and then to go on to Jerusalem, saying, "After I have gone there, I must also see Rome." (22) Then he sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, while he himself stayed in Asia a while longer.

This is the first time Paul mentions Rome. That was the seat of power of the Roman Empire, and Paul wanted the opportunity to preach the gospel there. First, though, he wanted to visit the churches of Macedonia and Achaia, to confirm and encourage the churches there and to take up an offering for the saints in Jerusalem. Paul sends Timothy and Erastus to Macedonia to prepare for his coming there.

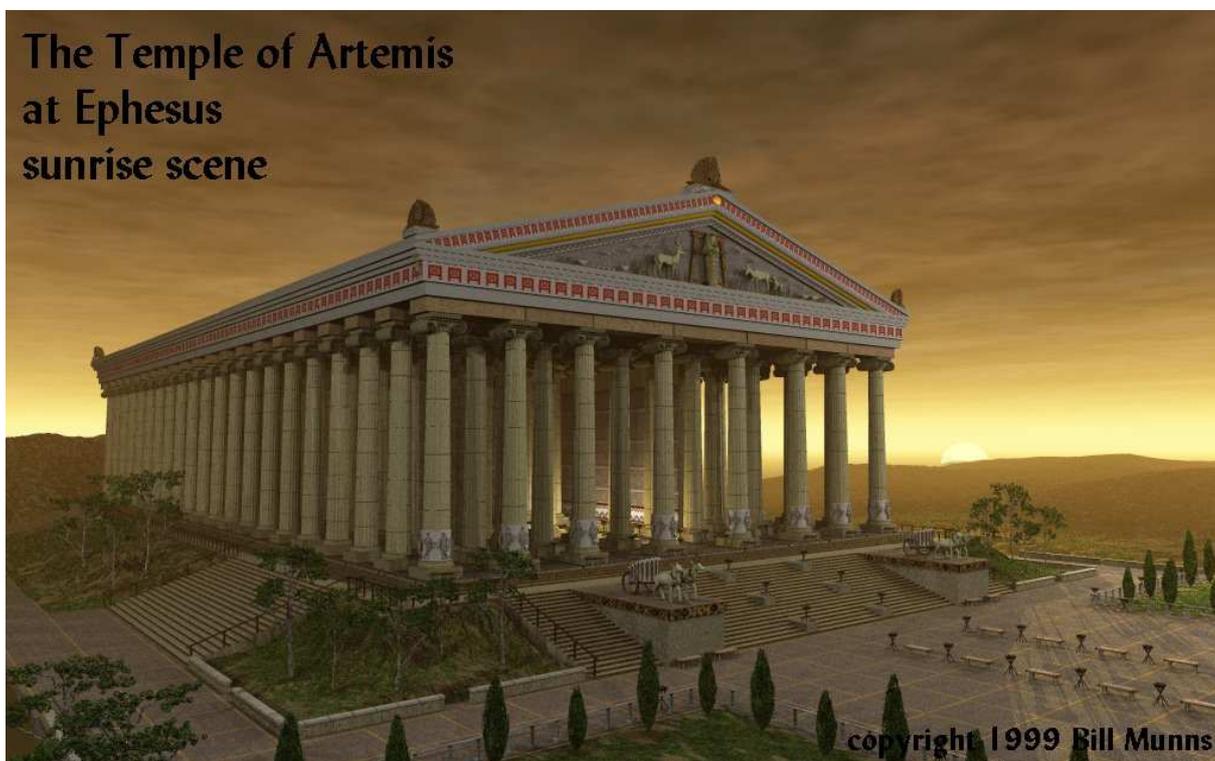
Acts 19:23-27 Now about that time a great commotion broke out concerning the Way. (24) By making silver shrines of Artemis, a silversmith named Demetrius provided a large income for skilled workers. (25) He called a meeting of these men and others who were engaged in similar trades and said, "Men, you well know that we get a good income from this business. (26) You also see and hear that, not only in Ephesus, but almost all over Asia, this man Paul has won over and taken away a large crowd by telling them that gods made by human hands are not gods at all. (27) There is a danger not only that our business will lose its reputation but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis

will be brought into disrepute and that she will be robbed of her majesty that brought all Asia and the world to worship her."

Artemis, called Diana by the Romans, was the name of a Greek goddess worshiped particularly in Asia Minor, whose temple, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, was located just outside the city of Ephesus. She was the "mother goddess", and these men are not exaggerating when they say that the whole world worships her. All the major religions of that time – Egyptian, Babylonian, etc., had a mother goddess figure. They may have different names but they are basically the same.

So these men had a business selling these little Artemis idols, and Paul must have been converting so many people that they were worried about losing money and that their religion would fade.

The Temple of Artemis at Ephesus sunrise scene



The last standing column of
what was the temple of Artemis

Acts 19:28-31 When they heard this, they became furious and began to shout, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" (29) The city was filled with confusion, and the people rushed into the theater together, dragging with them Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's fellow travelers from Macedonia. (30) Paul wanted to go into the crowd, but the disciples wouldn't let him. (31) Even some officials of the province of Asia who were his friends sent him a message urging him not to risk his life in the theater.

The Grand Theater in Ephesus (which has been excavated, see the photo below) stood facing down the main thoroughfare of the city toward the docks. It had a seating capacity of 25,000.



Acts 19:32-34 Meanwhile, some were shouting one thing and some another, since the crowd was confused, and most of them didn't know why they were meeting. (33) Some of the crowd concluded it was because of Alexander, since the Jews had pushed him to the front. So Alexander motioned for silence and tried to make a defense before the people. (34) But when they found out that he was a Jew, they all started to shout in unison for about two hours, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

It appears he was going to explain, as a Jew, that the problem was not caused by Jews, but by those of "the Way." However, he never got a chance to speak. Anti-Semitism took over, the mob refused to listen to a Jew, and they chanted in a frenzy for about two hours

Acts 19:35-41 When the city recorder had quieted the crowd, he said, "Men of Ephesus, who in the world doesn't know that this city of Ephesus is the keeper of the temple of the great Artemis and of the statue that fell down from heaven? (36) Since these things cannot be denied, you must be quiet and not do anything reckless. (37) For you have brought these men here, although they neither rob temples nor blaspheme our goddess.

(38) So if Demetrius and his workers have a charge against anyone, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. They should accuse one another there. (39) But if you want anything else, it must be settled in the regular assembly. (40) For we are in danger of being charged with rioting today, and there is no good reason we can give to justify this commotion." (41) After saying this, he dismissed the assembly.

Many interpreters view her image that fell from heaven as a stone meteorite that was regarded as a sacred object. The tradition was that it apparently had a shape which the pagan leaders of Ephesus interpreted as a many-breasted female which they identified as an image of the goddess.

Acts 20:1 When the uproar was over, Paul sent for the disciples and encouraged them. Then he said goodbye to them and left to go to Macedonia.

On this third journey Paul wrote 1 Corinthians from Ephesus, 2 Corinthians from Macedonia, and the letter to the Romans from Corinth.

There were other Ephesian adventures which Paul talks about in his letters, but Luke chose not to mention in Acts. Apparently Priscilla and Aquila risked their lives to save Paul at some point (Romans 16:3-4), he fought wild animals (1 Corinthians 15:32), although he could have speaking metaphorically there, he faced many adversaries (1 Corinthians 16:9, and encountered afflictions so severe that he was “despairing even of life” (2 Corinthians 1:8-10).

Paul's Third Journey and His Journey to Rome

