



After his second missionary trip Paul spent time in Antioch before setting off inland through Galatia and Phrygia encouraging the Christians who met there. He then made his way to Ephesus, the fourth largest city in the Roman Empire, with a population of over 250,000.



He met with the followers of Jesus in Ephesus and asked them. 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?'



'No,' they replied, 'we haven't even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.' They had only heard and experienced John the Baptist's baptism of repentance.



Paul explained that John the Baptist had told everyone to believe in the one who would come later, meaning Jesus. As soon as they heard this they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus.



Then when Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in other tongues and prophesied. There were about twelve men in all.



For the next three months Paul preached in the synagogue. However, some Jews rejected his message and opposed Jesus being taught as 'The Way' to God. So Paul and the believers left the synagogue. For the next two years, Paul held daily discussions at the lecture hall of Tyrannus. Jews and Greeks throughout the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.



God gave Paul the power to perform unusual miracles. When handkerchiefs or aprons that had merely touched his skin were placed on sick people, they were healed of their diseases, and evil spirits were expelled.



Some Jews tried to copy what Paul was doing. Seven sons of Sceva, a leading priest, were going from town to town casting out evil spirits. They tried to use the name of the Lord Jesus in their incantation, saying, 'I command you in the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, to come out!'



One time when they tried it, the evil spirit replied, 'I know Jesus, and I know Paul, but who are you?'



Then the man with the evil spirit leaped on them, overpowered them, and attacked them with such violence that they had to run from the house.



The story of what happened spread quickly through Ephesus and the name of the Lord Jesus was greatly feared and honored. Many who became believers confessed their sinful ways. A number of them who had been practising sorcery brought their expensive occult books and burned them at a public bonfire. So the message about the Lord spread widely and powerfully.



Afterward Paul was compelled by the Holy Spirit to go over to Macedonia and Achaia before going to Jerusalem. He sent his two assistants, Timothy and Erastus, ahead to Macedonia while he stayed a little longer in Asia.





Paul had spent over two years in Ephesus preaching about Jesus being 'The Way' to God. The new Christians became known as followers of 'The Way'.



In Ephesus was the Temple of the Greek goddess Artemis (worshipped by the Romans as the goddess Diana). People from all around the area came to worship at the Temple.



Demetrius, a silversmith, had a large business, employing many craftsmen, making silver shrines of the goddess Artemis. He called a meeting of craftsmen and traders who sold items to worshippers of Artemis.



'Gentlemen, you know that our wealth comes from this business,' Demetrius declared. 'But Paul has persuaded people around this area that handmade gods aren't really gods at all. I'm concerned that the temple Artemis will lose its influence and this magnificent goddess will be robbed of her great prestige!'



On hearing this, the men got very angry and began shouting, 'Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!'



The angry mob rushed towards the amphitheatre, a large stadium in Ephesus that could hold 25,000 people. *(This diagram of Ephesus shows the position of the amphitheatre).*



They dragged two of Paul's travelling companions from Macedonia, Gaius and Aristarchus, into the amphitheatre with them.



When Paul heard about the riot he wanted to go to the amphitheatre but the believers wouldn't let him. Officials who were also friends of Paul, were begging him not to risk his life and to stay away.



Inside, the people were all shouting, some one thing and some another. Everything was in confusion and many didn't even know why they were there.



The Jews in the crowd pushed Alexander forward and told him to explain the situation. He motioned for silence and tried to speak. But when the crowd realised he was a Jew, they started chanting again 'Great is Artemis of the Ephesians! Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!' They kept up this chant for two hours.



Eventually, the city clerk was able to get them quiet. 'Citizens of Ephesus,' he said. 'Everyone knows that Ephesus is the official guardian of the temple of the great Artemis, whose image fell down to us from heaven.'



'Stay calm. You have brought these men here, but they have not stolen from the temple or spoken against our goddess. If Demetrius and the craftsmen have a case against them they should make formal charges. The courts are in session and the officials can hear the case at once.'



'We are in danger of being charged by the Roman Government of rioting without a good reason. And if Rome demands an explanation, we won't know what to say.'



The city clerk dismissed them and they dispersed. When the uproar had ended, Paul sent for the disciples and, after encouraging them, said goodbye and set out for Macedonia.



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