

## **I. PAUL'S MINISTRY IN EPHEBUS**

### **A. Remember that at the end of Paul's Second Missionary Journey he promised to go back to Ephesus.**

#### **1. As in Paul's Second Missionary Journey Paul visits the churches he had established before.**

- a. This was important because the devil is always trying to destroy the church and the gospel; and Paul knew that the young Christians needed encouragement and strengthening in the faith.
- b. It seems that Paul's companion on the Third Missionary Journey was not Barnabas or Silas but Timothy. Silas is not mentioned again in the book of Acts. Silas may have travelled with Peter (see I Peter 5:12).
- c. Even before Paul came to Ephesus other important Christians travelled there: Aquila and Priscilla had gone there from Corinth; and a man called Apollos also arrived.

#### **2. Apollos was a great preacher but he did not know all the truth about Jesus which Paul had taught.**

- a. When Apollos came to Ephesus he started teaching in the synagogue. He was a good speaker and "mighty in the Scriptures" (v. 24) but his knowledge was very limited. He needed to know more.
- b. Apollos only knew "the baptism of John" (Acts 18:25). He knew that John the Baptist was the forerunner (remember that word from Lesson 1); he had been baptized by John after confessing his sins; but he did not know much about the work of Jesus (his cross and resurrection and the Spirit poured out at Pentecost). This is because he was from Alexandria in Egypt.
- c. So, Aquila and Priscilla (remember the tentmakers in Corinth) took Apollos aside and "expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly" (v. 26). After that Apollos went to Corinth & taught the church there.

### **B. Paul arrived in Ephesus and immediately got to work preaching in the synagogue for three months.**

#### **1. But many of the Jews were hardened in their sins, did not believe and spoke evil about Christ.**

- a. Paul, then, took the Christians out of the synagogue and began meeting in a school of a man called Tyrannus. He continued there for two years.
- b. Through Paul's preaching the whole region of Asia heard the Gospel and many believed.
- c. God even performed miracles by Paul's hands. Paul simply touched handkerchiefs and aprons and when these were laid on the sick they were healed and evil spirits went out of them (v. 12). These miracles showed the people of Ephesus that Paul was a preacher sent by God.

#### **2. There were many magic workers in Ephesus and men who claimed the power to cast out devils. When they saw that the name of Jesus has power to cast out devils they tried to copy Paul.**

- a. There were seven sons of a man called Sceva. They said to a man possessed by a devil, "We adjure thee by Jesus whom Paul preacheth" (Acts 19:13). But they were using Jesus' name as if it were a magic word, as if it were Abracadabra or Hocus Pocus.
- b. These men were unbelievers. They did not believe that Jesus is the Messiah. They wanted to make money and power out of Jesus as if was a good luck charm. Some do that today: they think that the "name of Jesus" will save them from bad things and make them rich.
- c. But the devil was not impressed by the seven sons of Sceva: "Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye?" He jumped on the men, tore their clothes off and the men ran out of the house naked and wounded!

#### **3. The news about the seven sons of Sceva spread through Ephesus; and people were afraid of the name of Jesus, so that the name of Jesus was held in great respect.**

- a. The people had to admit that Jesus was a powerful name and they were afraid to misuse that name; and many believed in Jesus and the church grew.
- b. Some of the Christians in Ephesus had been guilty of using magic and now they came with their magical books and burned them. These Christians saw that the power of Jesus is greater than the power of the devil. The cost of burning the books was huge: 50,000 pieces of silver.

## **II. TROUBLE IN EPHEBUS**

### **A. Ephesus was famous in the ancient world as the city of the temple of Diana**

#### **1. The temple in Ephesus was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. People came from all across the Roman empire to worship at it and take part in its religious festivals.**

- a. The temple had 1,000 pillars, and the people believed that the image of Diana had fallen from heaven.
- b. The month of May was dedicated to the worship of Diana with special games in her honour. At certain times Ephesus was crowded with people.
- c. And where there was religion there was the opportunity to make money.

#### **2. Demetrius was a silversmith who made money from selling shrines of the goddess Diana to the many visitors who came to worship in Ephesus.**

- a. When people came to visit the temple, Demetrius & his friends were selling little silver statues of Diana.

- b. These could be carried around as “good luck charms” or kept in the house to bring good luck to the house. Since Diana was the goddess of fertility these charms would help women get pregnant.
- c. But Demetrius noticed that fewer people were buying his Diana-shrines; he was losing money and he knew who was to blame: the Apostle Paul!

**B. Paul had been preaching in Ephesus for over two years, and many people no longer worshipped Diana, and so they had no need for the silver shrines made by Demetrius and the other metal workers.**

**1. Demetrius gathered together the workmen of Ephesus and blamed Paul for their loss of business.**

- a. You know, he said, how Ephesus is the great city of the Temple of Diana, and that we make our money from her worship. But this man Paul has turned men away from worshipping Diana because he says that gods made by men’s hands *are not true gods!*
- b. This, of course, was true: Paul preached that there is only one true God, that He is the Creator, that no man can make an image of Him, and that all idols of men are false.
- c. And he taught that salvation is not in Diana or any false god but only through Jesus Christ the Son of God by the power of His death on the cross and resurrection. And so many believed that Demetrius’ business was threatened. *If a preacher was so used by God that the pubs or other places of sin were closed, there might be a similar reaction today.*

**2. Demetrius’ speech before the metalworkers caused a demonstration against Paul**

- a. When the men heard Demetrius’ speech they were filled with anger and shouted “GREAT IS DIANA OF THE EPHESIANS.”
- b. The angry workmen took hold of some of the Christians who had travelled with Paul and brought them into the theatre. They wanted to find Paul but God had kept him safe.
- c. For Paul’s safety he was advised not to go into the theatre although he wanted to. And in the theatre the crowd shouted for two hours, “GREAT IS DIANA OF THE EPHESIANS!” After two hours the clerk of the court calmed them down and sent them away for making so much noise in a public place.

**III. PAUL LEAVES EPHESUS AND PREACHES IN TROAS**

**A. After the riot in Ephesus Paul left the city and made his way back into the region of Macedonia & Greece.**

**1. Most likely he went through Thessalonica, Corinth and Philippi and sailed from Philippi to Troas.**

- a. Luke was with him in Philippi (“and we sailed away from Philippi” [20:4]).
- b. The journey by ship took five days and then they spent seven days in Troas.
- c. On the first day of the week, the Christians gathered to hear Paul preach. It is important that this was the first day of the week: this was the day on which Jesus rose, and this was the day on which the Christians met for worship. We still meet for worship on the first day of the week, Sunday.

**2. Paul planned to leave the next morning and the Christians were eager to hear the preaching of Paul.**

- a. They met in a room three floors up, the room was filled with lamps, because Paul preached to midnight.
- b. One young man called Eutychus could not stay awake any longer. He fell asleep. And because he was not sitting on a chair but on the windowsill, this had disastrous consequences: He fell out of the window three stories down and was killed when he landed on the ground below.
- c. What a terrible shock! The people ran down to find Eutychus. Paul came down too and lay on him and raised him from the dead. The people were filled with joy. Eutychus was alive again.
- d. What would you have done then? The people followed Paul back upstairs and he preached for much longer until the morning. The people must have been keen to hear the Word of God! Are we?

**B. Paul’s journey back to Jerusalem brought him near Ephesus but he did not go back to Ephesus.**

**1. He called the elders of Ephesus to come to him at Miletus**

- a. Paul warned the elders to watch out for false teachers.
- b. And Paul said farewell to the elders of Ephesus. They knelt by the seaside, prayed and wept because Paul told them that they would not see him again.
- c. From Miletus Paul sailed to Caesarea and from there he went to Jerusalem, but at Caesarea Paul had a visit from the prophet Agabus who warned him that the Jews would capture him in Jerusalem.

**2. Paul was not afraid – he was ready to suffer and even to die for the Lord Jesus.**

- a. When he arrived in Jerusalem the Christians there received him gladly.
- b. Next week we shall see how Paul becomes a prisoner in Jerusalem and as a prisoner travels all the way to Rome. That will be our last lesson in NT history.