



## World Christian Fellowship

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### Seven Churches Ephesus Church- Revival and Beginning

Ephesus Church was a spiritually strong church founded and taught by the Apostle Paul and other apostles who followed him, located in the unique city of Ephesus.

It is probably true that even before Paul did the groundwork of giving form to the church that Aquila and Priscilla, who had been left there by Paul, did some preliminary foundation work.

**Acts 18:21**, *But as he left, he promised, "I will come back if it is God's will." Then he set sail from Ephesus.*

So, they were initially under the influence of Aquila and Priscilla, also influenced by that powerful Old Testament preacher by the name of Apollos who came there to Ephesus from Alexandria.

When he got there the only thing, he knew was the baptism of John – John the Baptist.

He didn't yet know about the Messiah Christ, so Aquila and Priscilla, taught him more perfectly the gospel.

**Acts 18:25-26**, *He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervour and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John.<sup>26</sup> He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately.*

Apollos must then have articulated with his great gifts the meaning of Old Testament truth in the light of the gospel which he had learned.

**Acts 18:24**, *Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures.*

So, before Paul even really did the work himself, Aquila, Priscilla and Apollos had had some influence on that church.

Paul, first, met people from Ephesus. You remember when he met on his third journey a group of believers in John the Baptist who had only known the baptism of John.

**Acts 19:1-5**, *While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples<sup>2</sup> and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."<sup>3</sup> So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied.*

*<sup>4</sup> Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus."<sup>5</sup> On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.*

Paul gave them the gospel, baptized them in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the beginning of Paul's direct work in building the Ephesian church.

Paul was there for three years.

### **Acts 20:31,**

Paul's work in Ephesus

**Acts 19:8-10**, *Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. <sup>9</sup> But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. <sup>10</sup> This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.*

Paul's preaching was so effective it went out of Ephesus, spread all over Asia during those two years and resulted in the founding of the other churches of Asia Minor to which the letters in Revelation 2 and 3 are also addressed.

**Acts 19:11-12**, *God did extraordinary miracles through Paul,<sup>12</sup> so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.*

Amazing miracles and unusual supernatural work of God was displayed through the ministry of Apostle Paul.

**Acts 19:13-15**, *Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, "In the name of the Jesus whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out."<sup>14</sup> Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this.<sup>15</sup> One day the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know about, but who are you?"*

In other words, what are you doing using the name of Jesus? Even the demons know who belongs in the kingdom and who doesn't. So, there were some dramatic things happening in this beginning time of the Ephesian church.

**Acts 19:18-19**, *Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed what they had done.<sup>19</sup> A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas.*

Remember the last lesson we saw the picture of the library?

They counted the price of them and found that 50,000 pieces of silver, books, all their magical arts, they burned. All the scrolls, all the secret formulas, they burned them.

They kept on burning.

How much is 50,000 pieces of silver?

With inflation and all of that, Drachmas. But maybe somewhere between \$250,000.00 and \$500,000.00.

This, of course, threw the entire city into chaos because the city was deeply involved in idol worship.

**Acts 19:23**, *About that time there arose a great disturbance about the Way.*

### **Why?**

Because it was hurting the business of the idol makers.

**Acts 19:24-25**, *A silversmith named Demetrius, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought in a lot of business for the craftsmen there. <sup>25</sup>He called them together, along with the workers in related trades, and said: "You know, my friends, that we receive a good income from this business.*

If you study the world history or ancient history, you know that there were such things as guilds in Europe. Where people who were artisans of the same craft would ban together, just like unions today. Perhaps less sophisticated, but just as powerful in

the community at which they existed. So, all of these people would ban together for common profit.

The temple of Diana was big business, a monstrous place, 420 feet by 250 feet, a huge place. Hundreds of people preached to eunuchs, temple worshippers, priestesses, prostitutes, the whole thing, all worshipping up there. This temple also was a treasure house for gold and silver.

So, it was a very wealthy place, a very famous place. People from all over the world came there.

Ephesus had at a period in the month of May, called the Artemesian games, where people from all over the known world congregated on the city of Ephesus.

The worship of Diana itself was frankly beyond description. The very idol itself was a big ugly. But the worship itself was beyond description. There were scores of eunuchs who had been castrated for the purposes of serving this god or goddess. There were thousands of priestesses who were nothing but prostitutes who believed that in sexual orgies they could lift the worshiper up into the presence of the deities. There were unnumbered heralds, those who proclaimed. There were singers, flutists, and dancers.

People doing banking, criminals trying to find asylum, people trying to look at the museum pieces, worship going on,

prostitution, music, feasts, festivals, and the whole hysteria became a frenzy of shameless sexual mutilation.

**1 Corinthians 16:8,**

Paul doesn't want to leave Ephesus – it's a great door, an effectual open, and a wonderful opportunity. Paul was going to remain in Ephesus – it may well be because he was waiting for the month of May.

In the month of May the Ephesian Games took place and pilgrims from all over the ancient world would descend into Ephesus and it would be the greatest evangelistic outreach opportunity of the year. That may have been the reason he said he wanted to stay there, because of that opportunity. Although we have no indication that he was able to remain that long.

**Acts 19:25,** *He called them together, along with the workers in related trades, and said: "You know, my friends, that we receive a good income from this business.*

Ephesus was filled with worshippers and for this merchant this was the time of making big money. What happened was the gospel had hit him right in the money bag. The gospel was entangling up their business because people were accepting the truth of Christ and turning from idols.

**Acts 19:26-29,** *And you see and hear how this fellow Paul has convinced and led astray large numbers of people here in*

*Ephesus and in practically the whole province of Asia. He says that gods made by human hands are no gods at all. <sup>27</sup> There is danger not only that our trade will lose its good name, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited; and the goddess herself, who is worshiped throughout the province of Asia and the world, will be robbed of her divine majesty.” <sup>28</sup> When they heard this, they were furious and began shouting: “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!” <sup>29</sup> Soon the whole city was in an uproar. The people seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul’s traveling companions from Macedonia, and all of them rushed into the theater together*

First problem, it is affecting our business, income.

Second, it is affecting their idol, their piety.

Their Temple was one of the wonders, it took nearly 222 years in building.

Third, the goddess, Diana, was recognised by the world. The whole civilized world, within certain reasonable bounds, was knowledgeable about Artemis.

Christianity hit them economically, religiously, and politically.

**Acts 19:31-34**, *Even some of the officials of the province, friends of Paul, sent him a message begging him not to venture into the theater. <sup>32</sup> The assembly was in confusion: Some were shouting one thing, some another. Most of the people did not even know why they were there. <sup>33</sup> The Jews in the crowd pushed Alexander to the front, and they shouted instructions to him. He*



*motioned for silence in order to make a defense before the people. <sup>34</sup> But when they realized he was a Jew, they all shouted in unison for about two hours: "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"*

So, there is the furious mob filling the theatre and they got these two guys standing in the middle of them.

List seven Wonders of Ancient World

1. Pharos Lighthouse, Alexandria
2. Pyramids, Cairo
3. Hanging Gardens, Babylon
4. Tomb of King Mausolus
5. Colossus, Rhodes
6. Statue of Zeus, Olympus
7. Temple of Diana, Ephesus

Imagine the courage of Paul!

30,000 people screaming he is cooling standing with two of his companions! I just adore this scene.

**Acts 19:35-41**, *The city clerk quieted the crowd and said: "Fellow Ephesians, doesn't all the world know that the city of Ephesus is the guardian of the temple of the great Artemis and of her image, which fell from heaven? <sup>36</sup> Therefore, since these facts are undeniable, you ought to calm down and not do anything rash. <sup>37</sup> You have brought these men here, though they have neither robbed temples nor blasphemed our goddess. <sup>38</sup> If, then,*

*Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a grievance against anybody, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. They can press charges. <sup>39</sup>If there is anything further you want to bring up, it must be settled in a legal assembly. <sup>40</sup>As it is, we are in danger of being charged with rioting because of what happened today. In that case we would not be able to account for this commotion, since there is no reason for it.” <sup>41</sup>After he had said this, he dismissed the assembly.*

He’s like the mayor.

Don’t you realize that there is in this city the worship of the great goddess Diana who came from heaven?

He was a smart man. He knows that the Romans are going to hold him responsible for all the trouble because he is in charge of the town.

The town clerk, Mayor, did a great favour for the Ephesians by quitting the riot.

So, they had some very strong beginnings with some very wonderful and godly and powerful people.

Paul not only was there for the period of time three years, but he also came back at a later time and was instrumental on his way to Jerusalem in stopping there to give a final course in church management to the elders recorded in Acts chapter 20.