

Paul's Second Journey **decide whether to use Jesus the Messiah or Christ and correct thru-out**

Scripture Passage: Acts 18:23-21:17

Memory Verse: Acts 19: 20 The word of the Lord spread everywhere. It became more and more powerful.

Beliefs:

Actions:

Materials

*additional passage versions & reference passages are included at the end of the lesson plan

maps
map markers for each group

Main Teaching Passage: Acts 18:23-21:17

18:23 Paul spent some time in Antioch. Then he left and traveled all over Galatia and Phrygia. He gave strength to all the believers there.

24 At that time a Jew named Apollos came to Ephesus. He was an educated man from Alexandria. He knew the Scriptures very well. 25 Apollos had been taught the way of the Lord. He spoke with great power. He taught the truth about Jesus. But he only knew about John's baptism. 26 He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. Priscilla and Aquila heard him. So they invited him to their home. There they gave him a better understanding of the way of God.

27 Apollos wanted to go to Achaia. The brothers and sisters agreed with him. They wrote to the believers there. They asked them to welcome him. When he arrived, he was a great help to those who had become believers by God's grace. 28 In public meetings, he argued strongly against Jews who disagreed with him. He proved from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Messiah.

Paul Goes to Ephesus

19 While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road to Ephesus. When he arrived, he found some believers there. 2 He asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?"

"No," they answered. "We haven't even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."

3 So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?"

"John's baptism," they replied.

4 Paul said, "John baptized people, calling them to turn away from their sins. He told them to believe in the one who was coming after him. Jesus is that one." 5 After hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 Paul placed his hands on them. Then the Holy Spirit

came on them. They spoke in languages they had not known before. They also prophesied. 7 There were about 12 men in all.

8 Paul entered the synagogue. There he spoke boldly for three months. He gave good reasons for believing the truth about God's kingdom. 9 But some of them wouldn't listen. They refused to believe. In public they said evil things about the Way of Jesus. So Paul left them. He took the believers with him. Each day he talked with people in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. 10 This went on for two years. So all the Jews and Greeks who lived in Asia Minor heard the word of the Lord.

11 God did amazing miracles through Paul. 12 Even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to those who were sick. When this happened, their sicknesses were healed and evil spirits left them.

13 Some Jews went around driving out evil spirits. They tried to use the name of the Lord Jesus to set free those who were controlled by demons. They said, "In Jesus' name I command you to come out. He is the Jesus that Paul is preaching about." 14 Seven sons of Sceva were doing this. Sceva was a Jewish chief priest. 15 One day the evil spirit answered them, "I know Jesus. And I know about Paul. But who are you?" 16 Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on Sceva's sons. He overpowered them all. He gave them a terrible beating. They ran out of the house naked and bleeding.

17 The Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus heard about this. They were all overcome with fear. They held the name of the Lord Jesus in high honor. 18 Many who believed now came and openly admitted what they had done. 19 A number of those who had practiced evil magic brought their scrolls together. They set them on fire out in the open. They added up the value of the scrolls. The scrolls were worth more than someone could earn in two lifetimes. 20 The word of the Lord spread everywhere. It became more and more powerful.

21 After all this had happened, Paul decided to go to Jerusalem. He went through Macedonia and Achaia. "After I have been to Jerusalem," he said, "I must visit Rome also." 22 He sent Timothy and Erastus, two of his helpers, to Macedonia. But he stayed a little longer in Asia Minor.

Trouble in Ephesus

23 At that time many people became very upset about the Way of Jesus. 24 There was a man named Demetrius who made things out of silver. He made silver models of the temple of the goddess Artemis. He brought in a lot of business for the other skilled workers there. 25 One day he called them together. He also called others who were in the same kind of business. "My friends," he said, "you know that we make good money from our work. 26 You have seen and heard what this fellow Paul is doing. He has talked to large numbers of people here in Ephesus. Almost everywhere in Asia Minor he has led people away from our gods. He says that the gods made by human hands are not gods at all. 27 Our work is in danger of losing its good name. People's faith in the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be weakened. Now she is worshiped all over Asia Minor and the whole world. But soon she will be robbed of her greatness."

28 When they heard this, they became very angry. They began shouting, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" 29 Soon people were making trouble in the whole city. They all rushed into the theater. They dragged Gaius and Aristarchus along with them. These two men had come with Paul from Macedonia. 30 Paul wanted to appear in front of the crowd. But the believers wouldn't let

him. 31 Some of the officials in Asia Minor were friends of Paul. They sent him a message, begging him not to go into the theater.

32 The crowd didn't know what was going on. Some were shouting one thing and some another. Most of the people didn't even know why they were there. 33 The Jews in the crowd pushed Alexander to the front. They tried to tell him what to say. But he motioned for them to be quiet. He was about to give the people reasons for his actions. 34 But then they realized that he was a Jew. So they all shouted the same thing for about two hours. "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" they yelled.

35 The city clerk quieted the crowd down. "People of Ephesus!" he said. "The city of Ephesus guards the temple of the great Artemis. The whole world knows this. They know that Ephesus guards her statue, which fell from heaven. 36 These facts can't be questioned. So calm down. Don't do anything foolish. 37 These men haven't robbed any temples. They haven't said evil things against our female god. But you have brought them here anyhow. 38 Demetrius and the other skilled workers may feel they have been wronged by someone. Let them bring charges. The courts are open. We have our governors. 39 Is there anything else you want to bring up? Settle it in a court of law. 40 As it is, we are in danger of being charged with a crime. We could be charged with causing all this trouble today. There is no reason for it. So we wouldn't be able to explain what has happened." 41 After he said this, he sent the people away.

Paul Travels Through Macedonia and Greece

20 All the trouble came to an end. Then Paul sent for the believers. After encouraging them, he said goodbye. He then left for Macedonia. 2 He traveled through that area, speaking many words of hope to the people. Finally he arrived in Greece. 3 There he stayed for three months. He was just about to sail for Syria. But some Jews were making plans against him. So he decided to go back through Macedonia. 4 Sopater, son of Pyrrhus, from Berea went with him. Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, and Timothy went too. Tychicus and Trophimus from Asia Minor also went with him. 5 These men went on ahead. They waited for us at Troas. 6 But we sailed from Philippi after the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Five days later we joined the others at Troas. We stayed there for seven days.

Eutychus Is Raised From the Dead at Troas

7 On the first day of the week we met to break bread and eat together. Paul spoke to the people. He kept on talking until midnight because he planned to leave the next day. 8 There were many lamps in the room upstairs where we were meeting. 9 A young man named Eutychus was sitting in a window. He sank into a deep sleep as Paul talked on and on. Sound asleep, Eutychus fell from the third floor. When they picked him up from the ground, he was dead. 10 Paul went down and threw himself on the young man. He put his arms around him. "Don't be alarmed," he told them. "He's alive!" 11 Then Paul went upstairs again. He broke bread and ate with them. He kept on talking until daylight. Then he left. 12 The people took the young man home. They were greatly comforted because he was alive.

Paul Says Goodbye to the Ephesian Elders

13 We went on ahead to the ship. We sailed for Assos. There we were going to take Paul on board. He had planned it this way because he wanted to go to Assos by land. 14 So he met us there. We took him on board and went on to Mitylene. 15 The next day we sailed from there. We arrived near Chios. The day after that we crossed over to Samos. We arrived at Miletus the next

day. 16 Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus. He didn't want to spend time in Asia Minor. He was in a hurry to get to Jerusalem. If he could, he wanted to be there by the day of Pentecost.

17 From Miletus, Paul sent for the elders of the church at Ephesus. 18 When they arrived, he spoke to them. "You know how I lived the whole time I was with you," he said. "From the first day I came into Asia Minor, 19 I served the Lord with tears and without pride. I served him when I was greatly tested. I was tested by the evil plans of the Jews who disagreed with me. 20 You know that nothing has kept me from preaching whatever would help you. I have taught you in public and from house to house. 21 I have told both Jews and Greeks that they must turn away from their sins to God. They must have faith in our Lord Jesus.

22 "Now I am going to Jerusalem. The Holy Spirit compels me. I don't know what will happen to me there. 23 I only know that in every city the Spirit warns me. He tells me that I will face prison and suffering. 24 But my life means nothing to me. My only goal is to finish the race. I want to complete the work the Lord Jesus has given me. He wants me to tell others about the good news of God's grace.

25 "I have spent time with you preaching about the kingdom. I know that none of you will ever see me again. 26 So I tell you today that I am not guilty if any of you don't believe. 27 I haven't let anyone keep me from telling you everything God wants you to do. 28 Keep watch over yourselves. Keep watch over all the believers. The Holy Spirit has made you leaders over them. Be shepherds of God's church. He bought it with his own blood. 29 I know that after I leave, wild wolves will come in among you. They won't spare any of the sheep. 30 Even men from your own people will rise up and twist the truth. They want to get the believers to follow them. 31 So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning you. Night and day I warned each of you with tears.

32 "Now I trust God to take care of you. I commit you to the message about his grace. It can build you up. Then you will share in what God plans to give all his people. 33 I haven't longed for anyone's silver or gold or clothing. 34 You yourselves know that I have used my own hands to meet my needs. I have also met the needs of my companions. 35 In everything I did, I showed you that we must work hard and help the weak. We must remember the words of the Lord Jesus. He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' "

36 Paul finished speaking. Then he got down on his knees with all of them and prayed. 37 They all wept as they hugged and kissed him. 38 Paul had said that they would never see him again. That's what hurt them the most. Then they went with him to the ship.

Paul Continues His Journey to Jerusalem

21 After we had torn ourselves away from the Ephesian elders, we headed out to sea. We sailed straight to Kos. The next day we went to Rhodes. From there we continued on to Patara. 2 We found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia. So we went on board and headed out to sea. 3 We came near Cyprus and passed to the south of it. Then we sailed on to Syria. We landed at Tyre. There our ship was supposed to unload. 4 We looked for the believers there and stayed with them for seven days. The believers tried to keep Paul from going on to Jerusalem. They were led by the Holy Spirit to do this. 5 When it was time to leave, we continued on our way. All the believers, including their whole families, went with us out of the city. There on the beach we got down on our knees to pray. 6 We said goodbye to each other. Then we went on board the ship. And they returned home.

7 Continuing on from Tyre, we landed at Ptolemais. There we greeted the brothers and sisters. We stayed with them for a day. 8 The next day we left and arrived at Caesarea. We stayed at the house of Philip the evangelist. He was one of the seven deacons. 9 He had four unmarried daughters who prophesied.

10 We stayed there several days. Then a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. 11 He came over to us. Then he took Paul's belt and tied his own hands and feet with it. He said, "The Holy Spirit says, 'This is how the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem will tie up the owner of this belt. They will hand him over to the Gentiles.' "

12 When we heard this, we all begged Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. 13 He asked, "Why are you crying? Why are you breaking my heart? I'm ready to be put in prison. In fact, I'm ready to die in Jerusalem for the Lord Jesus." 14 We couldn't change his mind. So we gave up. We said, "May what the Lord wants to happen be done."

15 After this, we started on our way to Jerusalem. 16 Some of the believers from Caesarea went with us. They brought us to Mnason's home. We were supposed to stay there. Mnason was from Cyprus. He was one of the first believers.

Paul Arrives in Jerusalem

17 When we arrived in Jerusalem, the brothers and sisters gave us a warm welcome.

Large Group Worship - 15 minutes

2 songs as closely related in theme as possible - Power in the Name of Jesus

- Family Service Project Info
- Small Group Challenge: Raise your hand if you have learned at least 1 verse so far this unit!
 - Keep your hand up if you've learned at least 2.
 - Wow!
 - Ok, keep your hand up if you've learned 3!
 - Whoa! What great work!
 - Has anyone learned all 3 weekly verses AND the theme verse so far?!
 - That's SO GREAT!!!
 - Keep updating the graph in your room so I can update the big one too. Check out all the work you are doing to hide God's Word in your heart! (point to main graph) I bet you are paying great attention to the Holy Spirit's instructions too. I'm so proud of you!

Opening Illustration - 5 minutes: Hey Siri!

- arrange with a few leaders to pay attention and flip lights - unless you can program Siri
- Say - I've been thinking about Siri and all the stuff she can do. She can be pretty helpful for something you can't see or feel, right?! Check this out...
 - Hey Siri! Turn the lights off.
 - lights go out
 - Hey Siri! Turn the lights back on.
 - lights on
 - Hey Siri! Turn the kitchen lights off (or some other adjacent room, volume, something)
 - do it

- Pretty cool, huh?! Do you remember when we studied about the Gifts of the Spirit and one of them is miracles? What is a miracle? *something only God can do, all the way, right away, God does it to teach about himself or bring himself glory, healing, water to wine, etc*
 - Does Siri do miracles?! I can't turn the lights off from here... hmmm.
 - dismiss to small groups
-

Teaching

- Review background of the book of Acts
 - Who wrote it: Luke
 - Who was it for: Theophilus & other Christians who would read it
 - What was it about: living life as a Christian without Jesus, but with the Holy Spirit
- Review last week's lesson:
 - Ask - Who can tell me super quickly about Paul?
 - Saul, Jew, formerly hater of Christians because didn't believe Jesus was the Messiah, super educated, light on the road/Jesus, Ananias, became a Christian, God had a big God Job for him
 - Who did Paul travel with on his first Journey? *Barnabas*
 - Who did he travel with on his second journey? *Silas and Timothy*
 - Can you tell me what happened in a couple of the different cities? *people believed in Jesus, Jews chased them out of town, kicked dust from sandals, got stoned, thought Barnabas was Zeus, Holy Spirit said no to Asia, God uses an earthquake to break them out of jail, Jason and other believers are arrested because they can't find Paul, deals with false gods by being smart, makes friends and tents, ...*

Teaching Tip:

This week we will update the map at the beginning of the lesson rather than throughout with generic markers. There will be a few pictures based on the major events. Feel free to give these to kiddos to hold ahead of time or as you go. Older students can mark the passages in their bibles to be prepared as you move through the events.

- Say - Paul and Silas got back to Antioch after being gone for a few years. They take a break for about a year then Paul decides it's time to head out again. We're going to go ahead and mark the map for this whole trip because it's got a lot of back and forth. Then we'll talk about the big stuff that happens like prophesying, potential jail, angry mobs, you know, normal Paul stuff.
 - Leaves by land and goes to visit churches in Rarsus,
 - Derbe,
 - Lystra,
 - Iconium,
 - Pisidian Antioch (any of these seem familiar?).
 - Then he cuts across Asia Minor (yep!) Laodicea,
 - Ephesus, Paul felt like he was supposed to end back up in Jerusalem but he didn't want to go straight back so he started a big loop going
 - north to Troas, sailed across to Philippi,
 - down to Thessalonica,
 - through Berea,

- further to Athens, where they turned around and
- went back up to Philippi to
- sail back across to Troas.
- After Troas Paul said the Holy Spirit was really telling him to go back to Jerusalem so they island hopped their way down the coast after he walked to Assos
- they sailed to Mitylene,
- Miletus,
- Rhodes,
- Patara, and
- finally made it back to home land. They debarked in Tyre and stayed with some Believers for a week.
- Then got back on a ship to land in Ptolemaic. They spent the night with some Believers and
- went on to Caesarea where he stayed with Philip for a bit then
- finally walked the rest of the way to Jerusalem.
- First happening isn't about Paul. (Acts 18:24-28) It's about Priscilla and Aquila. Remember them? Paul left them in ... *Ephesus*
- A man named Apollos showed up in Ephesus and started teaching. Guess what he was teaching about. *accept answers*
- He was teaching about Jesus!! Mostly. He knew a lot and he had been baptized. Priscilla and Aquila had gone to listen to him preach and invited him back to their house because they noticed something. He didn't know the WHOLE story!
- He had been baptized according to John the Baptist but not Jesus. That meant he showed that he believed the Messiah was coming and had confessed his sin, and he believed Jesus was the Messiah, but had not confessed Jesus as his Lord.
- Anyway, he learned more about Jesus and salvation from Priscilla and Aquila and then moved on to Corinth to continue spreading the Good News of Jesus the Messiah!
- So, let's note a couple of things.
 1. Apollos was a missionary who was never one of the Apostles!
 2. Apollos was a Jew, but he was from Alexandria in Egypt. South of Israel. This means the Gospel was spreading from regular people GOing!
 3. Priscilla and Aquila were still in Ephesus DISCIPLING and leading the Believers there. They were GOing!
 - It's interesting to notice that when Luke and Paul (both in their writings) mention Priscilla and Aquila when it's about work (tentmaking business) they write Aquila's name first and when they write about teaching scripture they use Priscilla's first. It's likely she was the bible teacher.

Meta-Narrative Link

- Say - (Acts 19:1-7) As we said Paul starts his trip by visiting all those churches he visited and started on this last trip. When he gets to Ephesus, Apollos was now in Corinth, he meets some Believers, disciples, and asked them what they believed. Interestingly they were like Apollos. They didn't know about the Holy Spirit and Jesus's baptism. After Paul shared with them about this they were baptized and received gifts from the Holy Spirit; the bible tells us they started immediately began speaking in tongues and prophesying!
- (Acts 19:8-22) Paul stayed in Ephesus for a couple of years because so many people were becoming Believers and learning so much about Jesus. During that time God used Paul to do many miracles, even long-distance miracles! The bible says that God had so empowered Paul that if a handkerchief or apron touched him then someone touched a sick person with that cloth, they would be healed!

- People realized how powerful Jesus was (is) and that declaring something in his name made miracles happen. A group of Jews (not Believers in Jesus) tried to cast out a demon saying, "In the name of the Jesus whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out!"
 - What was the problem with their statement? *they didn't believe in Jesus themselves, in whom Paul preaches*
 - What do you think the demon did? *accept answers*
 - It spoke to them! "Jesus I know and Paul I know about, but who are you?" and then it made the man it was inside jump on the them and beat them up!
 - How do you think this made people living in Ephesus feel when they heard about it? *accept answers*
 - Lots of them started confessing stuff they were doing wrong, burning things they knew didn't honor God, etc!!! They started believing in Jesus and his power! This made news of the Good News of Jesus spread even faster! GOing!
- (Acts 19:23-41) It sounds like everything went pretty awesome in Ephesus, right? But you know it's never that way. At one point they makers of the silver idols to one of the false goddesses, Artemis, got together with a bunch of other silversmiths. He convinced them that Paul was bad for business because he was going to convince everyone not to worship Artemis anymore.
 - The group got angry and started shouting, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" and started kind of a flashmob. People were pulled into the group without even knowing what was going on. Paul wanted to get to the front and talk to them, but the Believers pushed him back and wouldn't let him.
 - They tried to get a man, Alexander, to the front to speak but when the angry guys realized he was a Jew they just yelled "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians" louder and louder for TWO HOURS!
 - Finally the city clerk got them to be quiet and explained that they hadn't placed a legal complaint against Paul so actually they could be arrested for starting a riot. That got them to knock it off.
 - This is when Paul decided it was time to head out of Ephesus. He met with the Believers, disciples, a bit more to encourage them and say good-bye.
- (Acts 20:7-12) The next big happening is in Troas. Paul is planning to leave the next day so he decides he's going to preach all night while he can. They're meeting upstairs at someone's house where it's full and hot because they have all the lamps (fire) lit. A teenage boy, Eutychus, was sitting in one of the windows listening and fell asleep. (Give him a break! It was midnight and Paul was still going!)
 - What happens to your muscles when you fall asleep? *relax*
 - Yes! So he fell out of the 3rd story window and died!
 - Paul ran down, threw himself on the kid, wrapped his arms around him and yelled, "Don't be alarmed! He's alive!"
 - What do you think happened next? *accept answers*
 - Paul went back upstairs and started preaching again! He kept on until dawn!! But the bible tells us that everyone was "greatly comforted" that the boy was ok. Phew!
- (Acts 20:13-38) Paul really wants to get back to Jerusalem by the day of Pentecost so he doesn't go through Ephesus. This is why he island and coast hops. But he really wants to talk to the leaders of the church in Ephesus so he gets them to meet him in Miletus.
 - He talks to them about how to teach and take care of the new Believers in their care. Being a Pastor-Preacher-Missionary is a huge responsibility.
 - He also tells them that the Holy Spirit has told him over and over again that hardship and prison waits for him in Jerusalem. He doesn't know exactly how or what, but that it won't be fun and he has to go. He also told them he knew he'd never see them again.

- How would you react if you felt the Holy Spirit telling you to go do something you knew would be hard or could get you hurt? *accept answers*
- Can you think of an example? *accept answers*
- Finally, they cried and prayed together then Paul left.
- (Acts 21:15) You already know the last part of the journey. He sailed from coastal town to coastal town and stayed with friends. Why do you think he chose to stop and stay with friends during this time? *accept answers*
- Paul finally gets to Jerusalem. Do you know what happens? We'll talk about it next week before we start our review!

Scripture Memory

- Spend a few moments creating motions or a rhythm to go with the bible verse.
 - Session Verse:
Acts 19: 20 The word of the Lord spread everywhere. It became more and more powerful.
 - Theme Verse:
Matthew 28:19 So you must go and make disciples of all nations. Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Application Activities - 20 minutes:

Wrap Up

- Say - Tonight we learned all about Paul and Barnabas's second Journey to tell people, Jews and Gentiles, about Jesus the Messiah. He had visions and went to jail some more.
 - Say - Next week is review week, but we'll hear what happens to Paul in Jerusalem too. It's also Stump the Leaders with your questions about what we've studied and the night you get prizes for knowing your verses. The small group with the most verses earns a popcorn party!
- Be sure to send home their Family Page and Personal Study materials.

Family Component

-

Personal Study

-

Related Sources:

Additional Passages

Main Teaching Passage: Acts 15:36-18:22 (NIV)

15:23 After spending some time in Antioch, Paul set out from there and traveled from place to place throughout the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.

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. 25 He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor[a] and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John. 26 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.

27 When Apollos wanted to go to Achaia, the brothers and sisters encouraged him and wrote to the disciples there to welcome him. When he arrived, he was a great help to those who by grace had believed. 28 For he vigorously refuted his Jewish opponents in public debate, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Messiah.

Paul in Ephesus

19 While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples 2 and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when[b] you believed?"

They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."

3 So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?"

"John's baptism," they replied.

4 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." 5 On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues[c] and prophesied. 7 There were about twelve men in all.

8 Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. 9 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. 10 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.

11 God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, 12 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.

13 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." 14 Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. 15 One day the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know about, but who are you?" 16 Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding.

17 When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor. 18 Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed what they had done. 19 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.[d] 20 In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.

21 After all this had happened, Paul decided[e] to go to Jerusalem, passing through Macedonia and Achaia. "After I have been there," he said, "I must visit Rome also." 22 He sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, while he stayed in the province of Asia a little longer.

The Riot in Ephesus

23 About that time there arose a great disturbance about the Way. 24 A silversmith named Demetrius, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought in a lot of business for the craftsmen there. 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. 26 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. 27 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."

28 When they heard this, they were furious and began shouting: "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" 29 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. 30 Paul wanted to appear before the crowd, but the disciples would not let him. 31 Even some of the officials of the province, friends of Paul, sent him a message begging him not to venture into the theater.

32 The assembly was in confusion: Some were shouting one thing, some another. Most of the people did not even know why they were there. 33 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. 34 But when they realized he was a Jew, they all shouted in unison for about two hours: "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

35 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? 36 Therefore, since these facts are undeniable, you ought to calm down and not do anything rash. 37 You have brought these men here, though they have neither robbed temples nor blasphemed our goddess. 38 If, then, Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a grievance against anybody, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. They can press charges. 39 If there is anything further you want to bring up, it must be settled in a legal assembly. 40 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." 41 After he had said this, he dismissed the assembly.

Through Macedonia and Greece

20 When the uproar had ended, Paul sent for the disciples and, after encouraging them, said goodbye and set out for Macedonia. 2 He traveled through that area, speaking many words of encouragement to the people, and finally arrived in Greece, 3 where he stayed three months. Because some Jews had plotted against him just as he was about to sail for Syria, he decided to go back through Macedonia. 4 He was accompanied by Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, Timothy also, and Tychicus and Trophimus from the province of Asia. 5 These men went on ahead and waited for us at Troas. 6 But we sailed from Philippi after the Festival of Unleavened Bread, and five days later joined the others at Troas, where we stayed seven days.

Eutychus Raised From the Dead at Troas

7 On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight. 8 There were many lamps in the upstairs room where we were meeting. 9 Seated in a window was a young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep as Paul talked on and on. When he was sound asleep, he fell to the ground from the third story and was picked up dead. 10 Paul went down, threw himself on the young man and put his arms around him. "Don't be alarmed," he said. "He's alive!" 11 Then he went upstairs again and broke bread and ate. After talking until daylight, he left. 12 The people took the young man home alive and were greatly comforted.

Paul's Farewell to the Ephesian Elders

13 We went on ahead to the ship and sailed for Assos, where we were going to take Paul aboard. He had made this arrangement because he was going there on foot. 14 When he met us at Assos, we took him aboard and went on to Mitylene. 15 The next day we set sail from there and arrived off Chios. The day after that we crossed over to Samos, and on the following day arrived at Miletus. 16 Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus to avoid spending time in the province of Asia, for he was in a hurry to reach Jerusalem, if possible, by the day of Pentecost.

17 From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church. 18 When they arrived, he said to them: "You know how I lived the whole time I was with you, from the first day I came into the province of Asia. 19 I served the Lord with great humility and with tears and in the midst of severe testing by the plots of my Jewish opponents. 20 You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house. 21 I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.

22 "And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. 23 I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. 24 However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace.

25 "Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again. 26 Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of any of you. 27 For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God. 28 Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God,^[f] which he bought with his own blood.^[g] 29 I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. 30 Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. 31 So be on your

guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.

32 “Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. 33 I have not coveted anyone’s silver or gold or clothing. 34 You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. 35 In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’ ”

36 When Paul had finished speaking, he knelt down with all of them and prayed. 37 They all wept as they embraced him and kissed him. 38 What grieved them most was his statement that they would never see his face again. Then they accompanied him to the ship.

On to Jerusalem

21 After we had torn ourselves away from them, we put out to sea and sailed straight to Kos. The next day we went to Rhodes and from there to Patara. 2 We found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia, went on board and set sail. 3 After sighting Cyprus and passing to the south of it, we sailed on to Syria. We landed at Tyre, where our ship was to unload its cargo. 4 We sought out the disciples there and stayed with them seven days. Through the Spirit they urged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. 5 When it was time to leave, we left and continued on our way. All of them, including wives and children, accompanied us out of the city, and there on the beach we knelt to pray. 6 After saying goodbye to each other, we went aboard the ship, and they returned home.

7 We continued our voyage from Tyre and landed at Ptolemais, where we greeted the brothers and sisters and stayed with them for a day. 8 Leaving the next day, we reached Caesarea and stayed at the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven. 9 He had four unmarried daughters who prophesied.

10 After we had been there a number of days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. 11 Coming over to us, he took Paul’s belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, “The Holy Spirit says, ‘In this way the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.’”

12 When we heard this, we and the people there pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. 13 Then Paul answered, “Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.” 14 When he would not be dissuaded, we gave up and said, “The Lord’s will be done.”

15 After this, we started on our way up to Jerusalem. 16 Some of the disciples from Caesarea accompanied us and brought us to the home of Mnason, where we were to stay. He was a man from Cyprus and one of the early disciples.

Paul’s Arrival at Jerusalem

17 When we arrived at Jerusalem, the brothers and sisters received us warmly.

Main Teaching Passage: Acts 18:23-21:17 (MSG)

23 After spending a considerable time with the Antioch Christians, Paul set off again for Galatia and Phrygia, retracing his old tracks, one town after another, putting fresh heart into the disciples.

24-26 A man named Apollos came to Ephesus. He was a Jew, born in Alexandria, Egypt, and a terrific speaker, eloquent and powerful in his preaching of the Scriptures. He was well-educated in the way of the Master and fiery in his enthusiasm. Apollos was accurate in everything he taught about Jesus up to a point, but he only went as far as the baptism of John. He preached with power in the meeting place. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and told him the rest of the story.

27-28 When Apollos decided to go on to Achaia province, his Ephesian friends gave their blessing and wrote a letter of recommendation for him, urging the disciples there to welcome him with open arms. The welcome paid off: Apollos turned out to be a great help to those who had become believers through God's immense generosity. He was particularly effective in public debate with the Jews as he brought out proof after convincing proof from the Scriptures that Jesus was in fact God's Messiah.

19 1-2 Now, it happened that while Apollos was away in Corinth, Paul made his way down through the mountains, came to Ephesus, and happened on some disciples there. The first thing he said was, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? Did you take God into your mind only, or did you also embrace him with your heart? Did he get inside you?"

"We've never even heard of that—a Holy Spirit? God within us?"

3 "How were you baptized, then?" asked Paul.

"In John's baptism."

4 "That explains it," said Paul. "John preached a baptism of radical life-change so that people would be ready to receive the One coming after him, who turned out to be Jesus. If you've been baptized in John's baptism, you're ready now for the real thing, for Jesus."

5-7 And they were. As soon as they heard of it, they were baptized in the name of the Master Jesus. Paul put his hands on their heads and the Holy Spirit entered them. From that moment on, they were praising God in tongues and talking about God's actions. Altogether there were about twelve people there that day.

8-10 Paul then went straight to the meeting place. He had the run of the place for three months, doing his best to make the things of the kingdom of God real and convincing to them. But then resistance began to form as some of them began spreading evil rumors through the congregation about the Christian way of life. So Paul left, taking the disciples with him, and set up shop in the school of Tyrannus, holding class there daily. He did this for two years, giving everyone in the province of Asia, Jews as well as Greeks, ample opportunity to hear the Message of the Master.

Witches Came out of the Woodwork

11-12 God did powerful things through Paul, things quite out of the ordinary. The word got around and people started taking pieces of clothing—handkerchiefs and scarves and the like—that had touched Paul's skin and then touching the sick with them. The touch did it—they were healed and whole.

13-16 Some itinerant Jewish exorcists who happened to be in town at the time tried their hand at what they assumed to be Paul's "game." They pronounced the name of the Master Jesus over victims of evil spirits, saying, "I command you by the Jesus preached by Paul!" The seven sons of a certain Sceva, a Jewish high priest, were trying to do this on a man when the evil spirit talked back: "I know Jesus and I've heard of Paul, but who are you?" Then the possessed man went berserk—jumped the exorcists, beat them up, and tore off their clothes. Naked and bloody, they got away as best they could.

17-20 It was soon news all over Ephesus among both Jews and Greeks. The realization spread that God was in and behind this. Curiosity about Paul developed into reverence for the Master Jesus. Many of those who thus believed came out of the closet and made a clean break with their secret sorceries. All kinds of witches and warlocks came out of the woodwork with their books of spells and incantations and made a huge bonfire of them. Someone estimated their worth at fifty thousand silver coins. In such ways it became evident that the Word of the Master was now sovereign and prevailed in Ephesus.

The Goddess Artemis

21-22 After all this had come to a head, Paul decided it was time to move on to Macedonia and Achaia provinces, and from there to Jerusalem. "Then," he said, "I'm off to Rome. I've got to see Rome!" He sent two of his assistants, Timothy and Erastus, on to Macedonia and then stayed for a while and wrapped things up in Asia.

23-26 But before he got away, a huge ruckus occurred over what was now being referred to as "the Way." A certain silversmith, Demetrius, conducted a brisk trade in the manufacture of shrines to the goddess Artemis, employing a number of artisans in his business. He rounded up his workers and others similarly employed and said, "Men, you well know that we have a good thing going here—and you've seen how Paul has barged in and discredited what we're doing by telling people that there's no such thing as a god made with hands. A lot of people are going along with him, not only here in Ephesus but all through Asia province.

27 "Not only is our little business in danger of falling apart, but the temple of our famous goddess Artemis will certainly end up a pile of rubble as her glorious reputation fades to nothing. And this is no mere local matter—the whole world worships our Artemis!"

28-31 That set them off in a frenzy. They ran into the street yelling, "Great Artemis of the Ephesians! Great Artemis of the Ephesians!" They put the whole city in an uproar, stampeding into the stadium, and grabbing two of Paul's associates on the way, the Macedonians Gaius and Aristarchus. Paul wanted to go in, too, but the disciples wouldn't let him. Prominent religious leaders in the city who had become friendly to Paul concurred: "By no means go near that mob!"

32-34 Some were yelling one thing, some another. Most of them had no idea what was going on or why they were there. As the Jews pushed Alexander to the front to try to gain control, different factions clamored to get him on their side. But he brushed them off and quieted the mob with an impressive sweep of his arms. But the moment he opened his mouth and they knew he was a Jew, they shouted him down: "Great Artemis of the Ephesians! Great Artemis of the Ephesians!"—on and on and on, for over two hours.

35-37 Finally, the town clerk got the mob quieted down and said, "Fellow citizens, is there anyone anywhere who doesn't know that our dear city Ephesus is protector of glorious Artemis and

her sacred stone image that fell straight out of heaven? Since this is beyond contradiction, you had better get hold of yourselves. This is conduct unworthy of Artemis. These men you've dragged in here have done nothing to harm either our temple or our goddess.

38-41 "So if Demetrius and his guild of artisans have a complaint, they can take it to court and make all the accusations they want. If anything else is bothering you, bring it to the regularly scheduled town meeting and let it be settled there. There is no excuse for what's happened today. We're putting our city in serious danger. Rome, remember, does not look kindly on rioters." With that, he sent them home.

Macedonia and Greece

20 1-2 With things back to normal, Paul called the disciples together and encouraged them to keep up the good work in Ephesus. Then, saying his good-byes, he left for Macedonia. Traveling through the country, passing from one gathering to another, he gave constant encouragement, lifting their spirits and charging them with fresh hope.

2-4 Then he came to Greece and stayed on for three months. Just as he was about to sail for Syria, the Jews cooked up a plot against him. So he went the other way, by land back through Macedonia, and gave them the slip. His companions for the journey were Sopater, son of Pyrrhus, from Berea; Aristarchus and Secundus, both Thessalonians; Gaius from Derbe; Timothy; and the two from western Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus.

5-6 They went on ahead and waited for us in Troas. Meanwhile, we stayed in Philippi for Passover Week, and then set sail. Within five days we were again in Troas and stayed a week.

7-9 We met on Sunday to worship and celebrate the Master's Supper. Paul addressed the congregation. Our plan was to leave first thing in the morning, but Paul talked on, way past midnight. We were meeting in a well-lighted upper room. A young man named Eutychus was sitting in an open window. As Paul went on and on, Eutychus fell sound asleep and toppled out the third-story window. When they picked him up, he was dead.

10-12 Paul went down, stretched himself on him, and hugged him hard. "No more crying," he said. "There's life in him yet." Then Paul got up and served the Master's Supper. And went on telling stories of the faith until dawn! On that note, they left—Paul going one way, the congregation another, leading the boy off alive, and full of life themselves.

13-16 In the meantime, the rest of us had gone on ahead to the ship and sailed for Assos, where we planned to pick up Paul. Paul wanted to walk there, and so had made these arrangements earlier. Things went according to plan: We met him in Assos, took him on board, and sailed to Mitylene. The next day we put in opposite Chios, Samos a day later, and then Miletus. Paul had decided to bypass Ephesus so that he wouldn't be held up in Asia province. He was in a hurry to get to Jerusalem in time for the Feast of Pentecost, if at all possible.

On to Jerusalem

17-21 From Miletus he sent to Ephesus for the leaders of the congregation. When they arrived, he said, "You know that from day one of my arrival in Asia I was with you totally—laying my life on the line, serving the Master no matter what, putting up with no end of scheming by Jews who wanted to do me in. I didn't skimp or trim in any way. Every truth and encouragement that could have made a difference to you, you got. I taught you out in public and I taught you in your

homes, urging Jews and Greeks alike to a radical life-change before God and an equally radical trust in our Master Jesus.

22-24 “But there is another urgency before me now. I feel compelled to go to Jerusalem. I’m completely in the dark about what will happen when I get there. I do know that it won’t be any picnic, for the Holy Spirit has let me know repeatedly and clearly that there are hard times and imprisonment ahead. But that matters little. What matters most to me is to finish what God started: the job the Master Jesus gave me of letting everyone I meet know all about this incredibly extravagant generosity of God.

25-27 “And so this is good-bye. You’re not going to see me again, nor I you, you whom I have gone among for so long proclaiming the news of God’s inaugurated kingdom. I’ve done my best for you, given you my all, held back nothing of God’s will for you.

28 “Now it’s up to you. Be on your toes—both for yourselves and your congregation of sheep. The Holy Spirit has put you in charge of these people—God’s people they are—to guard and protect them. God himself thought they were worth dying for.

29-31 “I know that as soon as I’m gone, vicious wolves are going to show up and rip into this flock, men from your very own ranks twisting words so as to seduce disciples into following them instead of Jesus. So stay awake and keep up your guard. Remember those three years I kept at it with you, never letting up, pouring my heart out with you, one after another.

32 “Now I’m turning you over to God, our marvelous God whose gracious Word can make you into what he wants you to be and give you everything you could possibly need in this community of holy friends.

33-35 “I’ve never, as you so well know, had any taste for wealth or fashion. With these bare hands I took care of my own basic needs and those who worked with me. In everything I’ve done, I have demonstrated to you how necessary it is to work on behalf of the weak and not exploit them. You’ll not likely go wrong here if you keep remembering that our Master said, ‘You’re far happier giving than getting.’”

36-38 Then Paul went down on his knees, all of them kneeling with him, and prayed. And then a river of tears. Much clinging to Paul, not wanting to let him go. They knew they would never see him again—he had told them quite plainly. The pain cut deep. Then, bravely, they walked him down to the ship.

Tyre and Caesarea

21 1-4 And so, with the tearful good-byes behind us, we were on our way. We made a straight run to Cos, the next day reached Rhodes, and then Patara. There we found a ship going direct to Phoenicia, got on board, and set sail. Cyprus came into view on our left, but was soon out of sight as we kept on course for Syria, and eventually docked in the port of Tyre. While the cargo was being unloaded, we looked up the local disciples and stayed with them seven days. Their message to Paul, from insight given by the Spirit, was “Don’t go to Jerusalem.”

5-6 When our time was up, they escorted us out of the city to the docks. Everyone came along—men, women, children. They made a farewell party of the occasion! We all kneeled together on the beach and prayed. Then, after another round of saying good-bye, we climbed on board the ship while they drifted back to their homes.

7-9 A short run from Tyre to Ptolemais completed the voyage. We greeted our Christian friends there and stayed with them a day. In the morning we went on to Caesarea and stayed with Philip the Evangelist, one of “the Seven.” Philip had four virgin daughters who prophesied.

10-11 After several days of visiting, a prophet from Judea by the name of Agabus came down to see us. He went right up to Paul, took Paul's belt, and, in a dramatic gesture, tied himself up, hands and feet. He said, “This is what the Holy Spirit says: The Jews in Jerusalem are going to tie up the man who owns this belt just like this and hand him over to godless unbelievers.”

12-13 When we heard that, we and everyone there that day begged Paul not to be stubborn and persist in going to Jerusalem. But Paul wouldn't budge: “Why all this hysteria? Why do you insist on making a scene and making it even harder for me? You're looking at this backward. The issue in Jerusalem is not what they do to me, whether arrest or murder, but what the Master Jesus does through my obedience. Can't you see that?”

14 We saw that we weren't making even a dent in his resolve, and gave up. “It's in God's hands now,” we said. “Master, you handle it.”

15-16 It wasn't long before we had our luggage together and were on our way to Jerusalem. Some of the disciples from Caesarea went with us and took us to the home of Mnason, who received us warmly as his guests. A native of Cyprus, he had been among the earliest disciples.

Jerusalem

17-19 In Jerusalem, our friends, glad to see us, received us with open arms. The first thing next morning, we took Paul to see James. All the church leaders were there. After a time of greeting and small talk, Paul told the story, detail by detail, of what God had done among the non-Jewish people through his ministry. They listened with delight and gave God the glory.

Background Passage: Acts 15:1-35 (NIRV)

(The Jerusalem Council)