

Paul's Third Missionary Journey

Acts 18:23-21:14

Prayer

Lord, we know You are the only true God. Many in the world have not heard the precious Gospel message about what You have done to save everyone. Today we hear of one of Your followers who spent much of his life spreading that Gospel message. Help us gain strength and courage through our study so we boldly speak of You as You are, the Almighty God who made all and rules all the world. Amen.

The Story

The third missionary journey of Paul lasted about four years. Three of those years were spent in Ephesus, one of the largest cities of Asia Minor.



Ephesus was 1,000 years old by the time Paul reached it. While Paul was there, Ephesus was at the height of its glory, being the most prosperous business center of

that time.

There were many false gods and goddesses in Asia Minor at this time. The false goddess of Ephesus was Diana, daughter of Zeus, sister to Apollo. Ephesus enjoyed a sort of “sacredness” because the great temple to this make-believe goddess Diana lay just outside the city and was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Naturally, it attracted tourists by the thousands. Those tourists bought souvenirs, mostly small statues of Diana, made by silversmiths whose shops were everywhere in the city.

Paul had not been in Ephesus very long before he had those silversmiths so angry that they started a city-wide riot.

Acts 19:23-27 “And about that time there arose a great commotion about the Way. For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Diana, brought no small profit to the craftsmen. He called them together

with the workers of similar occupation, and said: ‘Men, you know that we have our prosperity by this trade. Moreover you see and hear that not only at Ephesus, but throughout almost all Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away many people, saying that they are not gods (if they) are made with hands.’”

Demetrius and his followers convinced the citizens that Paul’s ideas would overthrow not only their religion but their government. Everyone gathered in the streets, shouting and fighting. So the whole city was filled with confusion, and surrounded Paul in the center of town. Paul and his companions were in danger of being seized by the mob. Finally the city clerk quieted the crowd because he was afraid that the Roman army would come to restore order if he did not.

Paul was not frightened off by this trouble. He saw this great city as a field full of ripe grain, ready to be picked. By that we mean that there were many people who would be going to hell when they died because they had not heard about Jesus and that He had died to forgive all sins of all people. Paul stayed in Ephesus for nearly three years for one reason: to bring the gospel to the Gentiles.

And there WAS opportunity in Ephesus! Here is the sad story the Ephesians believed to be true.

For thousands of years the mighty Zeus had ruled mortals from the clouds of Mount Olympus with thunder and lightning. When Zeus was angry he punished the guilty (or the innocent.) When Zeus



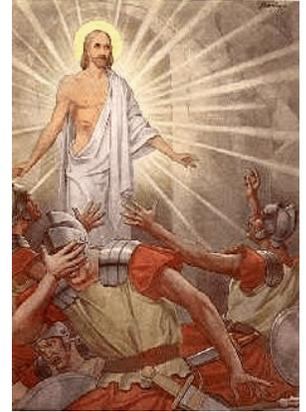
was bored he sent down other gods to cause suffering and misery. When good things happened it was because Zeus was pleased. When bad things happened it was because Zeus was angry.

Diana was the ruler of nature. She was the goddess who was credited with making farmers' crops grow or die. When people starved, Diana was given sacrificial offerings to encourage her to be more generous.

Quite a story, but the Ephesians believed it. They held holidays for their gods. Feasts and festivals to the gods were held in every home. These holidays were grand celebrations. Businessmen closed their shops. Gifts were given. Slaves were let go for a while. Even wars were put on hold.

You can see that these people needed to hear the truth. So Paul, full of the Holy Spirit, entered this great city and preached the Gospel about Jesus

Christ. He told them that there was a God who loved everyone in the world, not just the Jews. This True God sent His Son to die to take the punishment that all people deserved because of their sinfulness. He told them about the God who had risen from being dead. Faith is all that is needed to be saved by this Savior, Jesus Christ. God even creates that faith in man by the Holy Spirit through God's Word, the Bible.



Many people believed what Paul said about Jesus. All of Asia heard the Good News. The Holy Spirit was always with Paul, helping him preach.

Paul preached to the people in Ephesus and many became believers.

Activity One - Write AGREE or DISAGREE following each statement that follows. Be ready to explain why you answered as you did.

- _____ Paul spent most of his third missionary journey in Ephesus.
- _____ The people of Ephesus believed in many gods.
- _____ The people in Ephesus needed to hear Paul more than most of the other people in the world.
- _____ Saving faith must be faith in Jesus Christ as your personal Savior.
- _____ Everyone in Ephesus was happy to hear the new message Paul was preaching about the Savior Jesus.
- _____ Many of the people of Ephesus were greedy and wanted money.
- _____ Paul left Ephesus because he was afraid for his safety.
- _____ Paul's preaching was a failure because not everyone believed him.
- _____ No one today could do what Paul did in Ephesus back then.

Activity Two - Use the following charts to determine which books of the New Testament Paul wrote and where he was at the time. List the books under the correct journey or location in the chart on the right.

Journeys	Dates
At Damascus	37-40 AD
First Journey	45-47 AD
Second Journey	51-53 AD
Third Journey	54-58 AD
Imprisonment in Judea	58-60 AD
Voyage to Rome	60-61 AD
Imprisonment in Rome	61-63 AD
Post-Imprisonment Journeys	63-67 AD



Book of the Bible	Dates
First Thessalonians	52 AD
Second Thessalonians	52 AD
First Corinthians	57 AD
Second Corinthians	57 AD
Galatians	55-57 AD
Romans	57-58 AD
Ephesians	62 AD
Philippians	62 AD
Colossians	62 AD
Philemon	63 AD
Hebrews	64-65 AD
Titus	64-65 AD
First Timothy	64-65 AD
Second Timothy	66-67 AD

First Journey

Second Journey

Third Journey

Imprisonment in Judea

Voyage to Rome

Imprisonment in Rome

Post-Imprisonment Journeys

Passages - Although Paul did not write all of the passages below, he certainly would agree with them since they all come from God's Word, the Bible. Explain how each of the passages below fits the life and work of Paul, especially as we hear about it in our story today.

"The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest." Matthew 9:37-38

"In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths." Proverbs 3:6

"For whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Romans 10:13

"So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth: It shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it." Isaiah 55:11

"Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." Mark 16:15

Hymn - Answer the following questions about stanzas from Hymn # 506 from The Lutheran Hymnal:

<p>1. Send Thou, O Lord, to every place Swift messengers before Thy face, The heralds of Thy wondrous grace, Where Thou Thyself wilt come.</p>	<p>3. To bring good news to souls in sin, The bruised and broken hearts to win; In ev'ry place to bring them in Where Thou Thyself wilt come.</p>
<p>4. Thou who hast died, Thy vict'ry claim; Assert, O Christ, Thy glory's name And far to lands of pagan shame Send men where Thou wilt come.</p>	<p>5. Gird each one with the Spirit's Sword, The sword of Thine own deathless Word, And make them conquerors, conquering Lord, Where Thou Thyself wilt come.</p>

1. Which stanza tells us what our weapon is as we spread the news about the Savior Jesus? What is that weapon?

2. Which stanza tells us where we should take the saving message? Where should we take the Gospel?

3. Which stanza tells us what the good news is? What is the message we are to spread? The Holy Spirit has called us to be witnesses for Jesus Christ.

Prayer - Write a prayer in which, after addressing God in an appropriate manner, you thank Him for His work in your heart and life. Then ask God for strength to carry out the command to, "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature."