

LESSON 10

WITNESSING IN CORINTH AND EPHEBUS

ACTS 18:1–20:1

Introduction

Paul's witnessing on his second missionary journey was continued in Corinth after he left Athens. He spent more than eighteen months there; he travelled by way of Ephesus to Jerusalem and then to Antioch. His arrival in Antioch marked the end of the second missionary journey, but it was not the end of the Aegean campaign.

Paul desired to visit Ephesus on the first two journeys, but he was prevented from doing so until the close of his second journey. He spent a few days in Ephesus and promised to return again "if God wills" (18:21). Apparently it was the will of God for him to preach Christ there.

After a short stay in Antioch, Paul departed on his third missionary journey (18:23). His first task was to visit the churches in Galatia and Phrygia. His journey overland followed about the same route as the first part of his second missionary journey. After he had visited the churches in Phrygia, he was not prevented from entering Asia as on previous occasions. He spent three years in Ephesus and the surrounding region before going through Macedonia and Achaia on his last visit to the area.

The work at Ephesus closed the Aegean campaign. When Paul left that city, he felt compelled to go to Jerusalem. His plan was to collect an offering from the Gentile churches of Galatia, Macedonia, Achaia, and Asia for the poor Jewish Christians in Jerusalem who were experiencing a famine; therefore, he travelled throughout Macedonia and Achaia before going to Jerusalem. The trip gave him opportunity to bid farewell to the churches and Christian friends whom he would not see again.

Establishing the Corinthian Church Acts 18:1-17

Introduction

The journey to Corinth, the capital of Achaia, was fifty miles in distance. Corinth was a commercial city with a cosmopolitan population which numbered more than other cities Paul had visited. The city had been destroyed by the Romans in 146 B.C., but she had been rebuilt by Julius Caesar a hundred years later. As the capital of the province, she was the seat of the proconsul and was loyal to Rome. Her strategic location brought great prosperity. Corinth's ports of Cenchrea on the Gulf of the Aegina and Lechaem on the Gulf of Lepanto gave her control of the traffic between Rome and Asia. The journey around Cape Malea was long and dangerous. Therefore, the cargo from ships in one port would be unloaded and transported overland across the Isthmus of Corinth and loaded on ships in the other port for its final destination.

Prosperity and the large number of mariners whose work prevented their establishing home life added to the immorality of the city. "The immorality was even consecrated by religion: for the temple of Aphrodite Pandemos . . . possessed . . . a thousand

UNDERLINE ONE

Paul's arrival in Antioch marked the end of his (first, second, third) missionary journey.

(second)

Paul spent three years of his third journey in the city of _____, which is in the province, _____.

(Ephesus, Asia)

With the help of your map, list six cities in which Paul worked during the Aegean campaign.

1. P _____

2. T _____

3. B _____

4. A _____

5. C _____

6. E _____

(Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus)

Corinth was a _____ and _____ city.

(prosperous, immoral)

'hieroduli' or consecrated prostitutes."¹

Paul seems to have made Corinth the head-quarters for his work in Achaia; however, Luke gives only seventeen verses to his ministry which lasted for eighteen months. Much more is known of the Corinthian ministry from the Epistles written to the Church there. Luke is primarily concerned with the separation of the synagogue and the Church and the refusal of Gallio, the Roman proconsul, to judge the case of the synagogue against the Church.²

First contacts in Corinth (vv. 2-5)

Paul became acquainted with a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus (a rugged region of Northeast Asia Minor). Representatives from Pontus were in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost (cf. Acts 2:9). Aquila and his wife Priscilla had lived recently in Italy, but they had been expelled by the Emperor Claudius. Suetonius (*Life of Claudius*, XXV, 4) states that Jews were expelled from Rome because of constant tumult instigated by one "Chrestus". This was probably a reference to Christ with the usual misspelling of the name by Roman writers. The expulsion edict has been placed in the ninth year of Claudius which would be January 25, A.D. 49, to January 24, A.D. 50.³ Aquila may have arrived in Corinth early in A.D. 50 and Paul several months later (vv. 12ff.).

Perhaps Aquila and Priscilla were already Christians when Paul met them. Paul needed support; therefore, he joined them in the trade of tent-making. They became his lifelong friends. In defending his motives for preaching the Gospel, Paul reminded the Corinthians that he supported himself while in Corinth. He worked during the week and preached the Gospel on the Sabbath (cf. 1 Cor. 9; 2 Cor. 11:7ff.).

It appears that Paul kept on trying to persuade Jews and Greeks to receive Christ as Lord (v. 4), but he apparently made little headway (v. 6). He was physically weak and emotionally depressed which may have been the result of sickness (cf. 1 Cor. 2:3). The arrival of Silas and Timothy greatly bolstered his spirits. Gaius and Stephanas were the first fruits of Achaia (cf. 1 Cor. 1:14-16).

When Silas and Timothy arrived, Paul appears to have been relieved from manual labour. The Church of Philippi seems to have sent a gift of money to him, and he was able to devote himself completely to the teaching of the Word (v. 5). His companions also brought word that the Church of Macedonia was continuing in faith and love. This news greatly encouraged the Apostle.

Separation from the synagogue (vv. 6-11)

Although Paul earnestly taught the Jews that Jesus was the Christ, they resisted and blasphemed Christ. Since they had deliberately rejected the Word of God, Paul was no longer responsible for them. Their blood was upon their own heads (v. 6). Paul then went to the Gentiles.

After he left the synagogue, he found a place to preach and teach in the house next door which belonged to Titius Justus (v. 7). Paul's efforts to win the Jews were not completely wasted. Crispus, the president or ruler of the synagogue, and his household believed in the Lord. Luke comments that many Gentiles were receiving Christ and being baptized (v. 8).

¹ R. B. Rackham, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 321.

² Frank Stagg, *The Book of Acts*, p. 187.

³ Frank Stagg, *The Book of Acts*, p. 188.

List Luke's two emphases concerning Paul's Corinthian ministry.

1. _____

2. _____

(separation of the synagogue and the Church, refusal of Gallio to judge the case of the synagogue against the Church)

From Acts 18:2-3, we learn that Aquila and Priscilla were _____ from _____ who had been expelled from _____. Like Paul, their trade was _____ - _____.

(Jews, Pontus, Rome, tent-making)

Paul left the synagogue in Corinth because the Jews _____ and _____ Christ.

(resisted, blasphemed)

Persecution did not force Paul to leave the city; however, it appears that his life was threatened. He received a vision from the Lord who gave him assurance and instructions to continue preaching (v. 9). Paul was assured of divine protection against the attacks of men. The Lord would not permit him to be harmed until the people of the city who had been predestined to eternal life had responded in faith. Paul's stay in the churches of Macedonia had been cut short by persecution, but he was permitted to abide in Corinth eighteen months.

The trial before Gallio (vv. 12-17)

Gallio may have become proconsul of Achaia shortly before the Jews accused Paul before him. He probably occupied the office on July 1, A. D. 51 (v. 12); therefore, Paul arrived in the latter part of A.D. 50 or early A.D. 51. The Jews had been unsuccessful in frightening Paul with threats; therefore, they sought legal action in order to have him expelled from the city. The Jews, as in other cities, had become jealous when they heard Paul teaching Gentiles that it was not necessary for them to keep the ceremonial law of Moses. The Jews accused Paul of persuading "men to worship God contrary to the law" (v. 13). Gallio's reply to the charge implies that the law which Paul was charged with breaking was the Jewish law instead of the Roman law. Gallio seems to have had little patience with the Jews (v. 14). He refused to judge the quarrel among the Jews concerning their religious customs and had the officers drive the mob from the court. It appears that Gallio did not distinguish between Judaism and Christianity.

Luke does not make clear who beat Sosthenes, the leader of the synagogue. R. B. Rackham concludes that Gallio's rebuff of the hated Jews gave the Gentiles the opportunity to seize and beat Sosthenes without fear of retaliation from him.⁴ He may have been beaten by the Jews for mismanaging the case against Paul.

Paul's Return to Syrian Antioch
Acts 18:18-22

Paul continued in Corinth "many days longer" after being taken before Gallio. The journey to Syrian Antioch was about 1, 500 miles. His plans probably called for a trip to Jerusalem to fulfil a vow (v. 18). In Paul's day the Nazarite vow had been modified. Instead of a lifetime abstinence from wine and cutting the hair, one could take the vow for a minimum of thirty days. The beginning of the period of the vow was marked by cutting the hair. At the conclusion of the period, the head was shaven. Jews who were in foreign lands would often keep their hair until they arrived in Jerusalem. The hair was then burnt in the fire of sacrifice. Perhaps Paul took the vow to express gratitude to God for the success of the work among the Gentiles and for deliverance from his enemies.

Paul was not adverse to Jewish customs. As a Jew he made the vow and observed feasts whenever possible at Jerusalem. Paul refused to compromise, however, on the doctrine of salvation by faith. Gentiles were not required to keep Jewish customs in order to be saved.

Paul took Priscilla and Aquila with him when he departed

Answer YES or No.

1. Did Gallio imply that Paul was charged with breaking Roman law?_____
2. Was Gallio impatient with the Jews?_____
3. Did Gallio refuse to judge matters concerning religious customs?_____

(1.-no, 2.-yes, 3.-yes)

Paul took the Nazarite vow to express gratitude to_____

(God)

⁴ *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 331.

from Cenchrea, the seaport of Corinth. The listing of Priscilla's name first may indicate that she was the more prominent evangelist of the two. While the ship was docked at Ephesus, Paul had a few days to share his faith with the Jews in the synagogue. The Jews begged him to stay with them longer. He left Priscilla and Aquila in Ephesus to continue the work. On two previous occasions, Paul had desired to go to Ephesus and he finally had the opportunity. His visit was brief, but he promised to return if God willed (v. 21).

Paul's ship took him to Caesarea on the coast of Samaria. Paul went "up, and saluted the church" (v. 22). It is uncertain whether the Church was at Caesarea or Jerusalem. He probably visited the Church in Jerusalem before "he went down to Antioch" (v. 22). Paul's return to Antioch marks the end of what traditionally is known as his second missionary journey.

The Church at Ephesus

Acts 18:23-19:41

Introduction

Ephesus was a populous, wealthy city of Asia and was the capital and administrative centre of the Roman province of Asia. Rome had allowed Ephesus to remain a free city. On Paul's third missionary journey, he spent three years there. Perhaps his efforts extended to the surrounding cities of Smyrna, Philadelphia, Colossae, Laodicea, Hierapolis, and Miletus.

The famous temple of Artemis stood near Ephesus. The Greek goddess Artemis (the Latin Diana) attracted many pilgrims to her magnificent temple which was served by thousands of priests and other ministers. The Ephesians were aware of the great wealth which the goddess brought to their city; therefore, they gave her grateful and official support. To Greeks and Romans, Diana was a chaste goddess of the hunt; however, her image depicted her as lewd and having four rows of breasts. She had been a fertility or nature goddess before the rise of Greek culture in Asia Minor. Although the worship of Diana may not have included immorality and prostitution, it did contribute to the growth of superstition and magic. Magic became one of the specialties of Ephesus, resulting in a strange mixture of Hellenic culture and philosophy and Oriental superstition. It is not surprising that the Church faced later the great danger of being influenced into heresy by the surrounding culture. Paul warned the Ephesian presbyters against false teachers (cf. 20:29ff.).

The emphasis of the Epistles to Timothy, which were written to him at Ephesus, is "guard the faith." The Apostle John later lived at Ephesus and found it necessary to combat Gnosticism.

Paul's visit to Galatia and Phrygia (18:23)

It has been suggested that while Paul was at Antioch, he heard from Timothy of the doctrinal disturbances in the Galatian churches. Paul wrote the Epistle to the Galatians to refute the teachings of Judaizers who were emphasizing that Gentiles must keep the customs of Moses. Jews of Pisidian Antioch and Iconium had strongly opposed Paul when he first worked in those cities. It is not surprising that they continued to undermine his teachings after his departure.

Luke does not dwell on any particular incident related to Paul's visiting the churches of Galatia and Phrygia. It is implied that he took enough time to teach the disciples in each city, "strengthening all the disciples" (v. 23).

While passing through Ephesus before his three-year stay there, Paul left P. _____ and A. _____ to continue the work.

(Priscilla, Aquila)

Artemis, the Greek goddess, was the same as _____, a fertility and nature goddess.

(Diana)

The activities of Apollos (18:24-28)

Apollos was a Jew from Alexandria where the Hellenic culture was very strong. Philo, an Alexandrian Jew, had combined Greek philosophy with Judaism. Other Jews there were interested in receiving a Greek education.

Apollos is described as "an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures" (v. 24). There is no doubt that he was a learned man. He probably had studied Greek philosophy and rhetoric which included principles of speaking. He was likely a polished orator who set forth his views with skill and logic. As a Jew, he had received extensive instruction in the Old Testament Scriptures.

It is interesting to note that Apollos and the twelve at Ephesus (cf. 19:1ff.) were disciples of John the Baptist. Apollos had responded to the teaching of John that the Day of the Lord, when God would establish His Kingdom, was at hand; however, he had not received the instruction that the Kingdom had arrived in Jesus Christ. He did not understand that the Messiah must suffer, be put to death, and be resurrected in order for God's promise of the eternal Kingdom to be realized.

Priscilla and Aquila gave Apollos a fuller understanding of "the way of God" (v. 26). They would know about the importance of the suffering and resurrection of the Messiah since they may have been in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost (some from Pontus were there), and they had received instruction from Paul who lived with them.

Luke fails to mention whether Apollos received the Holy Spirit and was baptized after his more complete instructions. It is not surprising that he decided to go to Achaia, the centre of Hellenism, to work in the Church at Corinth. He was encouraged by the disciples at Ephesus who wrote a letter to the Church, commending Apollos. Luke notes that he greatly strengthened the Corinthian work because of his ability to refute the Jews by using the Old Testament Scriptures to demonstrate that Jesus was the Christ (v. 28).

Paul's work in Ephesus (19:1-41)

The twelve disciples of John (vv. 1-7).—Paul arrived in Ephesus after Apollos had gone to Corinth. Luke records the interesting incident of Paul's discovering twelve disciples of John the Baptist.

John had called upon the people to repent because the Day of the Lord had arrived. The Jews believed that God's presence had departed from them and had left them exposed to their enemies because they had sinned by worshipping idols. The people were required to repent before the Lord would return with blessings. John announced that the Day of the Lord was at hand and the people should repent and expect the Messiah (God's chosen or anointed) to appear (cf. Matt. 3). The twelve had believed John, had repented, and had been baptized to demonstrate their spiritual cleanness. They were expecting the Messiah, but they had not heard that Jesus was He; therefore, they had not entered the Kingdom by receiving the Holy Spirit (being born again) through faith in Jesus. Apparently the twelve had heard nothing of the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus. While Apollos appears to have known about Jesus' birth and ministry, he did not understand that the Messiah must suffer, be put to death, and be resurrected to be the eternal King.

The coming of the Holy Spirit into the life of a person has no fixed pattern in Acts. According to 8:17 and 19:6, the coming of the Spirit was connected with the laying on of hands. The speaking with tongues and prophesying (19:6) gave evidence that the twelve had received the Holy Spirit. In the case of Cornelius, the Spirit came upon God-fearing Greeks while Peter was preaching (10:44). The twelve at Ephesus were baptized in the

<p>Apollos was an Alexandrian_____</p> <p>(Jew)</p>
<p>TRUE OR FALSE?</p> <p>Apollos was a learned man and "mighty in the scriptures." _____</p> <p>(true)</p>
<p>Apollos was a disciple of _____</p> <p>the_____, and he learnt more fully "the way of God" from _____ and _____.</p> <p>(John, Baptist, Priscilla, Aquila)</p>
<p>Paul found twelve of John the Baptist's _____ in _____</p> <p>(disciples, Ephesus)</p>
<p>What further instruction did John's disciples need?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>(concerning the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and the coming of the Holy Spirit)</p>

name of the Lord Jesus before they received the Holy Spirit. Cornelius received the Holy Spirit before baptism. The fact that he had received the Spirit was given as a reason for baptizing him. Although no set pattern is given for the receiving of the Spirit, Luke makes it clear that Jews and Gentiles who believe in Jesus receive the power of the Kingdom, the indwelling Spirit, which enables them to proclaim the message of the Kingdom and to do the work of Christ.

It is obvious from this section that the Gospel had reached Ephesus before Paul arrived. Luke does not explain how the Gospel first was carried there. His purpose appears to be that of showing how Paul's interpretation of Christ's death and resurrection were necessary to correct the erroneous or incomplete views of Christ.

The power of the Church (vv. 8-12).—It is understandable why Paul did not emphasize the concept of the Kingdom of God when he preached in Roman provinces. He had already been accused of being a traitor to Caesar. The phrase "Kingdom of God" carried political overtones. The word *ekklesia* (church) was already established among Jews and God-fearers as a religious term referring to God's people because of its use in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament). Paul chose this word in preference to the phrase Kingdom of God; however, he used this phrase occasionally when speaking to Jews (v. 8).

After some of the Jews began to close their minds to Jesus as the Messiah, Paul chose to separate from the synagogue. "The multitude" possibly referred to God-fearing Gentiles; therefore, Paul withdrew with them from the synagogue before they were confused by the arguments of the Jews. Christianity was frequently called "the way" (v. 9). After Paul withdrew from the synagogue he taught "daily in the school of Tyrannus" (v. 9). The school was probably a lecture room connected to a gymnasium for the use of grammarians, poets, and philosophers for giving lectures. The facilities may have included gardens, walks, and colonnades. Those at leisure (*schole*—school) would listen to lectures. *Schole* came to be applied to the lecture itself.

Paul's arrangement for the lecture room enabled the people who came to Ephesus to listen to the Word of the Lord as they relaxed. Paul continued the lectures daily for two years. Luke gives the general statement "that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks" (v. 10).

Jews had rejected Paul's teachings about the Kingdom of God probably because he showed that people of all nations were included. The truth of Paul's preaching concerning the power of the Kingdom was demonstrated through "special miracles by the hands of Paul" (v. 11). The use of handkerchiefs and aprons or towels was an accommodation to the superstitious faith of the Ephesians. Those cloths which had touched his body were carried to the sick and placed on their bodies. The incident is parallel to 5:12-16 where Peter's shadow possessed the power to bring healing to the sick. The power of healing was not in the cloths or the shadow, but from the Lord. The cloths served as a support to superstitious faith. The people believed that Jesus whom Paul preached had the power to heal, but their faith needed a tangible sign—something that could be seen or felt.

The sons of Sceva (vv. 13-18)—Certain Jewish exorcists who observed the miracles by the hands of Paul attempted to pervert the use of the divine power. They decided that the name Jesus was a magic word which could be used to further their own selfish ends. Magic and false spiritualism were widespread in Ephesus. The experience of the Jewish exorcists, the "seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests" (v. 14), was used to warn the people that spiritual power from God cannot be perverted.

Two of the exorcists uttered the name of Jesus over a

Paul showed that Christ's _____
and _____ were necessary to a complete
Gospel.

(death, resurrection)

demoniac. Like the evil spirits described in the Gospels, the demon recognized the power of Jesus and knew Paul but was not fearful of the superficial spiritual power of the sons of Sceva. The man who was demon possessed "leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded" (v. 16). News of the event quickly spread to all the Jews and Greeks in Ephesus.

The false spirituality of the magicians and exorcists was exposed and the name of Jesus was magnified. Many believed that He was God's chosen King; therefore, they confessed their sins and demonstrated their repentance by their deeds. Evil practices were abandoned. Those who claimed to be magicians burnt their books publicly which was a public recantation. Because of the high cost of material on which books were written and the arduous labour involved in copying them by hand, the amount of silver by which they were appraised was great (v. 19). Luke concludes the story by noting that the Word of God increased mightily (v. 20).

Future plans (vv. 21-22).—Verse 20 contains Luke's eighth summary statement. The phrase, "After these things were ended," indicates that the second great campaign had been completed and a new era of Paul's life was about to begin. R. B. Rackham makes verse 21 the beginning of the third division in Paul's ministry.⁵ The Holy Spirit impelled Paul to visit Jerusalem after he had revisited the churches of Macedonia and Achaia. Afterwards, he felt that he should also go to Rome (v. 21).

During the three-year sojourn in Ephesus, Paul wrote at least one and probably three Epistles to the Church of Corinth. Ephesus served also as headquarters for a great Asian campaign. It is possible that he was imprisoned at Ephesus, but Luke does not describe either the Asian campaign or the imprisonment.

Luke mentions a trip planned for Macedonia and Achaia (cf. 19:21; 20:1f.), but he does not mention the collection from the Gentile churches in Galatia, Macedonia, and Asia for the Jerusalem Christians who were in the midst of famine (cf. 1 Cor. 16:1-3). Paul likely thought that the offering would reduce the tension of the Jew-Gentile relationship. He wrote of his plans to visit Macedonia before arriving in Corinth and to spend the winter in Corinth (1 Cor. 16:5ff.). Probably word had come to Paul concerning the trouble in the Macedonian churches; therefore, he sent Timothy and Erastus ahead of himself to give guidance until he arrived (Acts 19:22). He planned to stay at Ephesus until Pentecost (1 Cor. 16:8).

It appears that Paul's plans were changed after the departure of Timothy and Erastus. He encountered trouble in Ephesus which almost led to his death (cf. 2 Cor. 1:10). Some scholars believe that he was cast into the arena to fight with wild beasts; others believe that the language is symbolic (1 Cor. 15:32). Luke fails to give a full account of the dangers Paul faced in Ephesus.

The controversy with Demetrius (vv. 23-41).—The author of Acts has already given evidence that the Gospel made a great impact upon Ephesus. The controversy with Demetrius, a silversmith, adds evidence of the influence of the Church. This controversy did not result from the plotting of Jews but from Gentiles whose business was being affected. The ostensible cause of the riot was religious zeal, but the real cause was interference with economic gains. Demetrius was involved in the profitable

The lesson which the sons of Sceva learnt was

(spiritual power from God cannot be perverted)

List two of Paul's experiences at Ephesus which Luke does not describe.

1. _____
2. _____

(the great Asian campaign, possible imprisonment)

Answer YES or NO.

Did Paul probably believe that an offering from Gentile churches for Christians in Jerusalem would relieve the tension between Jews and Gentiles? _____

(yes)

Match the causes concerning the controversy with Demetrius.

- _____ 1. apparent cause of riot
 - _____ 2. real cause of riot
- a. interference with economic gains
b. religious zeal

(1.-b, 2.-a)

⁵ *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 359.

business of making silver images of Artemis (Diana), but after Paul had preached many months in Ephesus the interest in idols had diminished. Pilgrims who worshipped Artemis often purchased silver idols to carry home with them. The influence of Paul's ministry had discouraged the purchase of the idols to the extent that "there arose no small stir about that way" (v. 23). After Demetrius called workmen of similar trades together, he told them that "almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands" (v. 26). Even though the statement was an exaggeration, it reveals that the work of Paul had influenced greatly not only Ephesus but the surrounding territory.

Demetrius appealed not only to the economic but also to the religious emotions of the workmen. He pointed out that if Paul continued to preach, the great goddess Artemis would be regarded as worthless. He also appealed to national pride by stating that the people of the world would cease to come to Ephesus to worship (v. 27). Many people responded to the threat to their religion. A riot ensued in which the people began crying out "Great is Diana of the Ephesians" (v. 28).

Perhaps the workmen were unable to find Paul; therefore, they grabbed Gaius and Aristarchus, who had come with Paul from Macedonia, and dragged them into the theatre. Although Asia was governed by a proconsul, Ephesus was a free city, and many matters were still governed by the *demos* or people. Three times each month the people assembled in their *ekklesia* (assembly). An extraordinary assembly for special occasion could be called also. A selected secretary of the assembly or town clerk presided over the assembly, kept minutes, and summoned and dismissed the assembly. An extraordinary assembly was called to try Gaius and Aristarchus.

The town clerk eventually called the multitude to order and rebuked them for their emotional irrationality (v. 35). He reminded them that they did not have to defend Artemis or to inform any citizen that Ephesus was guardian of the temple of the great goddess. Artemis was represented by a sacred rock which tradition stated had fallen down from heaven —perhaps a meteor (v. 35b). Since the assembly was limited in power, the town clerk suggested that Demetrius and his craftsmen take their complaints to the proconsuls whose courts were then in session. If they were not satisfied with the decision of the proconsuls, the issue would be taken up in a regular assembly (v. 39). The town clerk feared that the mob riot would be interpreted as a revolt against Rome and would result in the loss of freedom. He did not think the accusations of Demetrius and his tradesmen were serious enough to merit the calling of an extraordinary assembly.

In addition to the Roman proconsuls and the secretary of the assembly, a third group of political officials are mentioned (v. 31). When Paul saw his companions being dragged into the theatre, he desired to enter the theatre and speak to the people. He was prevented from endangering his life by Asiarchs ("the chief of Asia") who were his close friends.

Asiarchs were provincial officers. Each province had a council of delegates from the chief cities who managed the common provincial business. Their chief responsibility was to supervise provincial worship of the Roman Emperor. The purpose of the worship was a test of loyalty and a bond of unity for the Empire. In connexion with the common worship of the Emperor, there was a provincial celebration including games and festivals. The president of the provincial council presided over the festivities and games. He was given the title of ruler of the province (Asiarch). It is interesting to note that those responsible for the worship of the Emperor had become close friends of Paul.

Ekklesia (the New Testament term for church) is used to

What were the duties of the secretary of the *ekklesia* or town clerk?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

(presided over the assembly, kept minutes, summoned and dismissed the assembly)

Asiarchs were provincial _____ .

They became close friends of _____ .

(officers, Paul)

refer to a secular assembly of the people in Acts 19:32, 39, 41. The term refers to an organization of people who met on specific occasions to transact particular business. Although the organization had a presiding officer who called the meeting to order, the people determined the business matters in a democratic fashion. Since this particular term was selected to designate the New Testament Church, it is evident that the Church conducted its meetings in like fashion. The spiritual assembly would have a leader who called the meeting to order and presided over the democratic organization. The leader did not have an authoritative voice to decide for the assembly. His responsibilities were assigned by the assembly who selected him. He was responsible to it.

Luke presents the interesting incident involving Alexander (vv. 33ff.). The Jews had taken a fanatical stand against idolatry. Perhaps to avoid being identified with the Christians, Alexander, who was spokesman for the Jews, attempted to get a hearing. As soon as the Gentiles saw that he was a Jew, they burst forth in two hours of shouting, "Great is the Diana of the Ephesians" (v. 34). Only after they had exhausted themselves was the town clerk able to gain their attention and point out their foolishness (vv. 36ff.).

Paul's Departure from Ephesus
Acts 20:1

The uproar in Ephesus caused Paul to leave the city at once. During the next year the Apostle travelled through Macedonia and Achaia to encourage the churches before making his last journey to Jerusalem.

Gentiles opposed Alexander because he was a _____ and he took a stand against _____.

(Jew, idolatry)

Home Study Assignment

Basic study (Levels 1, 2, and 3). After reading the study guide text, answer the following questions:

1. What marked the end of Paul's second missionary journey? _____

2. In what province and city did Paul spend most of his third journey? _____

3. List six cities in which Paul worked during the Aegean campaign. (Refer to your map.)

4. Give two emphases of Luke concerning Paul's work in Corinth. _____

5. Who were Aquila and Priscilla? _____

6. What caused Paul to leave the synagogue in Corinth? _____

7. How did Gallio answer the charge of the Jews against Paul? _____

8. Why did Paul have his hair cut in Cenchrea? _____

9. Who was Artemis? _____

10. Who was Apollos? _____

11. Why did the twelve disciples of John at Ephesus need further instructions? _____

12. What was Paul's contribution to Christian work in Ephesus? _____

13. What was the school of Tyrannus? _____

14. What was the purpose of the special miracles in Ephesus? _____

15. What lesson did the sons of Sceva learn? _____

16. Name two experiences of Paul at Ephesus which Luke fails to mention. _____

17. How did Paul plan to relieve the tension of the Jew-Gentile relationship? _____

18. Name the apparent cause and the real cause of the riot at Ephesus. _____

19. What were the functions of the secretary of the *ekklesia* or the town clerk? _____

20. Who were the Asiarchs? _____
21. Why did the Gentiles react to Alexander? _____

Supplementary activities (Levels 2 and 3):

1. Compare or contrast the concept of Church and Kingdom of God.
2. Who was Sosthenes?
3. Explain the secular and religious meaning of *ekklesia*.

Advanced activities (Level 3):

1. Read pages 187 to 207 in *The Book of Acts* by Frank Stagg.
2. Establish the dates of Paul's Corinthian and Ephesian ministries.
3. Explain why the twelve disciples of John at Ephesus had not received the Holy Spirit.

Seminar Discussion

1. What is the relation of the Church and the Kingdom of God?
2. In the light of the situation of Apollos and the twelve disciples of John, how did the baptisms of John and Jesus differ in meaning?
3. How did Paul's work in Corinth differ from his work in Ephesus?
4. How did the structure of society in Jerusalem, Corinth, and Ephesus possibly influence the polity (whether leaders or people had the authority) of the churches in those cities?