

entering the amphitheater.

³² Inside, the people were all shouting, some one thing and some another. Everything was in confusion. In fact, most of them didn't even know why they were there. ³³ The Jews in the crowd pushed Alexander forward and told him to explain the situation. He motioned for silence and tried to speak. ³⁴ But when the crowd realized he was a Jew, they started shouting again and kept it up for two hours: "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians! Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

³⁵ At last the mayor was able to quiet them down enough to speak. "Citizens of Ephesus," he said. "Everyone knows that Ephesus is the official guardian of the temple of the great Artemis, whose image fell down to us from heaven. ³⁶ Since this is an undeniable fact, you should stay calm and not do anything rash. ³⁷ You have brought these men here, but they have stolen nothing from the temple and have not spoken against our goddess.

³⁸ "If Demetrius and the craftsmen have a case against them, the courts are in session and the officials can hear the case at once. Let them make formal charges. ³⁹ And if there are complaints about other matters, they can be settled in a legal assembly. ⁴⁰ I am afraid we are in danger of being charged with rioting by the Roman government, since there is no cause for all this commotion. And if Rome demands an explanation, we won't know what to say." ⁴¹ [Then he dismissed them, and they dispersed.

5. Discussion: (a) How was idol worship threatened by Paul's ministry? (b) Was the Ephesus riot more political or spiritual? Explain! (c) What can we learn about spiritual battles from this story?

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An Interactive Life Application Bible Study of the Acts of the Apostles for Small Groups

Key: *Blue* = New Testament *Red* = Words of Jesus

Green = Old Testament Quotes

Lesson 25

1. Paul's Third Missionary Journey.

Acts 19:1-7 While Apollos was in Corinth (in southern Greece), Paul traveled through the interior regions (of what is now Turkey) until he reached Ephesus, on the coast, where he found several believers. ² "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" he asked them.

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

³ "Then what baptism did you experience?" he asked.

And they replied, "The baptism of John."

⁴ Paul said, "John's baptism called for repentance from sin. But John himself told the people to believe in the one who would come later, meaning Jesus."

⁵ As soon as they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶ Then when Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in other tongues and prophesied. ⁷ There were about twelve men in all.

2. Background Information: The Holy Spirit develops love and releases power to minister special gifts: Tongues and prophecy are two among many spiritual gifts (See Rom. 12:6-8; 1st Cor. Chs. 12-13; Eph. 4:11-12; 1 Peter 4:8-10). Some men may have prophesied while the rest spoke in tongues.

3. Discussion: What did Paul think was needed for the men at Ephesus, in order to receive the Holy Spirit?

4. Paul Ministers in Ephesus.

Acts 19:8-22 Then Paul went to the synagogue and preached

boldly for the next three months, arguing persuasively about the Kingdom of God.⁹ But some became stubborn, rejecting his message and publicly speaking against the Way. So Paul left the synagogue and took the believers with him. Then he held daily discussions at the lecture hall of Tyrannus.¹⁰ This went on for the next two years, so that people throughout the province of Asia—both Jews and Greeks—heard the word of the Lord.

¹¹ God gave Paul the power to perform unusual miracles.
¹² When handkerchiefs or aprons that had merely touched his skin were placed on sick people, they were healed of their diseases, and evil spirits were expelled.

¹³ A group of Jews was traveling from town to town casting out evil spirits. They tried to use the name of the Lord Jesus in their incantation, saying, “I command you in the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, to come out!”¹⁴ Seven sons of Sceva, a leading priest, were doing this.¹⁵ But one time when they tried it, the evil spirit replied, “I know Jesus, and I know Paul, but who are you?”¹⁶ Then the man with the evil spirit leaped on them, overpowered them, and attacked them with such violence that they fled from the house, naked and battered.

¹⁷ The story of what happened spread quickly all through Ephesus, to Jews and Greeks alike. A solemn fear descended on the city, and the name of the Lord Jesus was greatly honored.¹⁸ Many who became believers confessed their sinful practices.¹⁹ A number of them who had been practicing sorcery brought their incantation books and burned them at a public bonfire. The value of the books was several million dollars.²⁰ So the message about the Lord spread widely and had a powerful effect.

²¹ Afterward Paul felt compelled by the Spirit to go over to Macedonia and Achaia before going to Jerusalem. “And after that,” he said, “I must go on to Rome!”²² He sent his two assistants, Timothy and Erastus, ahead to Macedonia (area north of Greece) while he stayed awhile longer in the province of Asia (Turkey).

5. Discussion: (a) Why did Paul move the believers to the lecture hall of Tyrannus? (b) How long did Paul minister in the Roman province of Asia? (c) What importance do you think miracles played? (d) What effect does this story have on your faith? (e) How can *copycat religion be exposed* and avoided? (f) What signs of genuine repentance resulted from God’s power seen in Ephesus? (g) Has the Holy Spirit ever compelled you to do something? (v. 21) Tell about it.

6. The Riot in Ephesus.

Acts 19:23-41 About that time, serious trouble developed in Ephesus concerning the Way.²⁴ It began with Demetrius, a silversmith who had a large business manufacturing silver shrines of the Greek goddess Artemis. He kept many craftsmen busy.²⁵ He called them together, along with others employed in similar trades, and addressed them as follows:

“Gentlemen, you know that our wealth comes from this business.²⁶ But as you have seen and heard, this man Paul has persuaded many people that handmade gods aren’t really gods at all. And he’s done this not only here in Ephesus but throughout the entire province!²⁷ Of course, I’m not just talking about the loss of public respect for our business. I’m also concerned that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will lose its influence and that Artemis—this magnificent goddess worshiped throughout the province of Asia and all around the world—will be robbed of her great prestige!”

²⁸ At this their anger boiled, and they began shouting, “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!”²⁹ Soon the whole city was filled with confusion. Everyone rushed to the amphitheater, dragging along Gaius and Aristarchus, who were Paul’s traveling companions from Macedonia.³⁰ Paul wanted to go in, too, but the believers wouldn’t let him.³¹ Some of the officials of the province, friends of Paul, also sent a message to him, begging him not to risk his life by