

Ephesus

To the Ends of the Earth - Paul's second missionary journey

Foundation

Bible passage : Acts 19:21-41

Paul had been to Ephesus before but had not stayed long and instead had promised to return. When he visited again, he stayed more than two years in the city and during that time made sure that everyone heard about Jesus and so many came to believe in Him too.

Some of the people who became Christians had been involved in “magic arts” which is forbidden by God in the Bible. These people, knowing what they had done was wrong in God’s sight, had therefore burned their spell books when they came to believe in Jesus.

Other people had worshipped other gods and in particular the goddess Artemis for whom there were many shrines and statues in Ephesus and a large temple nearby described as one of the ‘Seven Wonders of the Ancient World’. A common part of their worship had have small shrines and to buy silver statues of the supposed goddess. But, when these people came to believe the good news about Jesus that was bad news for those who made shrines and for the silversmiths. Therefore people said that Paul was telling them that the gods made with hands are not gods, which, of course, they aren’t. So Demetrius, one of the silversmiths stirred up trouble and many of the people who worshiped Artemis started a riot. Some of the disciples therefore found themselves dragged off by a mob of rioters. Paul wanted to go and talk to the crowd but others were worried by this and so stopped him.



A model of what the ancient temple of Artemis is thought to have looked like, located in a miniature park in Istanbul.

After several hours of shouting, it was the town clerk who calmed people down. Ephesus was part of the Roman empire and the clerk was worried that if things continued then Roman authorities and garrison in the city would step in garrison in the city and stop the trouble with force.

“So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.” (v20)

As a result Paul and the others were kept safe, but Paul had already decided that he should go through Macedonia again, and then to Jerusalem. So, having spent such a long time in Ephesus he decided it was time to go.

Again, we see how it was dangerous for Paul and his friends to spread the light of Christ. We also see that when people turned to Jesus, they stopped doing things that God said were wrong. We also see again how some were upset by this and wanted to try to put out **the light of Christ**, but they could not.



When people trust in Jesus their lives are changed and sometimes others are offended by the what changes.