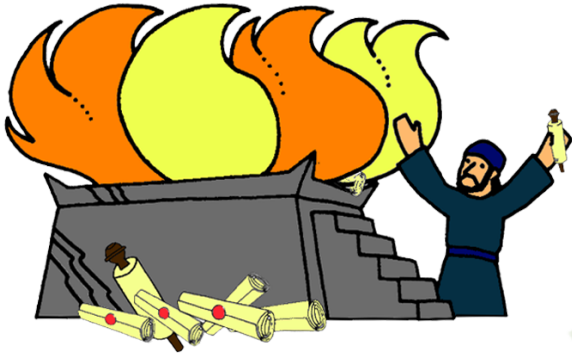


Paul and the Dark Powers at Ephesus- Paul's 3rd Journey

Scripture Reference: [Acts 19:1-41](#)



Suggested Emphasis: It is wrong to practice things like sorcery, magic, witchcraft, horoscopes or anything else that acknowledges and gives importance to a power other than God.



Background
Study



Story
Introduction



Telling
the Story



Review
Questions



Songs



Learning
Activities



Other Online
Resources

Story Overview:

During his third missionary journey Paul returned to Ephesus and spent three years there. He taught about Jesus in the synagogue and in a city school. Some of the most unusual miracles in the Book of Acts occurred during Paul's stay in Ephesus. They were so convincing that magicians and sorcerers burned all of their expensive sorcery books and turned to God. So many people stopped worshipping idols (and buying idol statues) that a silversmith named Demetrius led a riot against Paul.

Background Study:

[Click here for an overview of the Book of Acts](#)



Map available from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/>

Paul was both an apostle and a missionary. After spending time with his sending and sponsoring church (Antioch) he now sets off over land for what has come to be called his 3rd Missionary Journey ([Acts 18:23](#)). Before arriving in Ephesus Paul passed through places where he had established churches on his [1st Missionary Journey](#) and 2nd Missionary Journey. This 3rd Journey will eventually take Paul through Macedonia and Greece with a notable stop in Troas ([where young Eutychus falls from a window](#)) before [Paul returns to Jerusalem](#).

But now, upon his arrival in Ephesus, Paul meets twelve followers of Jesus who are teaching the baptism of John the Baptist. They must not have previously met any of the thousands of Jewish Christians who had heard or heard about the Christian baptism the Apostle Peter preached about in the [Sermon at Pentecost](#). These men were following Jesus but probably had not connected baptism with his resurrection and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Paul explained these things to them and baptised them in the name of Jesus Christ. Similar to the case where [Cornelius Became a Christian](#) the Holy Spirit displayed his power by causing these men to “speak in tongues” (instant ability to speak another language despite never having studied it) and prophesy (declare inspired truth from God).

As usual Paul first began teaching in the Jewish synagogue. And, as usual, some at the synagogue angrily refused to accept that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah sent by God. So, after three months, Paul and those that believed moved to a public lecture hall (Hall of Tyrannus) where Paul continued teaching for two years.

The Good News of Jesus heard by visitors passing through this important and busy city was spread to an ever-widening audience as people travelled about. But the “Good News” was actually “Bad News” for the evil spirits and many practitioners of false worship in [Ephesus](#). God made his superior divine power clearly known so that even sorcerers and those that followed this practice renounced these powers of darkness and confessed that Jesus is the worlds true king. Many sorcerers made their confessions publicly by burning their sorcery scrolls.

God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, 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. Acts 19:11-12, NIV

Some travelling Jewish spiritualists unsuccessfully tried to take advantage of this new popular power by claiming

to cast out demons *“in the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches”*. In one almost humorous occasion, as they were attempting to exorcise a demon from a man, the demon actually spoke up and said to these men, “Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you?” The demon-possessed man then overpowered and even beat them so that they had to run out of the house naked and bleeding. ([Acts 19:13-17](#)).

The excavated ruins of ancient Ephesus are located near modern-day [Selcuk, Turkey](#). Ephesus was known as the city which contained one of the “Seven Wonders of the Ancient World”-the [Temple of Artemis](#). In some versions of the Bible the alternative name of the Roman goddess, Diana, is used in this passage as she was sometimes equated with the Greek goddess, Artemis.

Who would want to purchase silver images of Artemis if Jesus was more powerful? One of the silversmiths, Demetrius, began campaigning against Paul. This culminated in an angry shouting crowd gathered in the city [amphitheatre](#). For about two hours everyone was chanting “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!”

Paul desperately wanted to address the crowd but his companions and even the friends he had made among officials in the province kept him from entering the area. Finally, the city clerk was able to disperse the crowd by reminding them that Demetrius could take the matter to court if he wished and that no one would want to be charged with rioting. Ephesus was a Roman city. If Rome heard that there were riots in the city then everyone would suffer the repercussions.

Following this uprising Paul met with the disciples then left Ephesus.

Special Note to the Teacher:

The Bible is clear about God’s supremacy but, even in the same family or church, there may be different interpretations of how that applies to various literature, television shows or movies that children are exposed to. What one family might allow as “harmless fantasy” another might steer their children away from as actually spiritually harmful or wrong. So be respectful of this and apply discernment and diplomacy.

But, wherever one places boundaries, it would be wrong to deny or avoid the important subject of spiritual warfare. I would suggest becoming familiar with the subject through articles such as this one at <http://www.christiananswers.net/q-eden/edn-occult.html> , especially if you are teaching older or very curious children. And remember that we do not have to live in fear. God is above all powers and gives us what we need to fight any trick Satan throws our way.

- [Ephesians 6:10-18](#)
- [Romans 8:37-39](#)
- [Ephesians 1:18-23](#)



[Previous Lesson](#)



[Next Lesson](#)



[List of all lessons on this website](#)

Way to Introduce the Story:

Find examples of horoscopes in magazines or newspapers and bring them to class. (You might think of other examples that are familiar to the children (psychics, crystal balls, etc.) Discuss the fact that people who use these try to predict the future. "Some people say that there are hidden powers or that the stars can tell them what will happen in the future. Let's read what the bible says about the future—read Ecclesiastes 8:7. No one knows what will happen in the future except for God. In today's story we will learn about a time when Paul visited a city where lots of people thought they could do sorcery and magic and predict the future."

[top](#)

The Story:

(Note: This story contains a lot of elements. If you are teaching younger children I would suggest choosing only one part of the story to concentrate on. Perhaps just tell the part about the silversmiths being angry because they couldn't sell their idols.)

Paul was a missionary. The church in the city of Antioch sent Paul on a number of "Missionary Journeys" to tell people about Jesus. Today we are going to learn about something that happened on Paul's "3rd Missionary Journey".

In the first part of the journey Paul went back to places where he had been before. He taught the Christians how to have a strong faith.

After visiting these churches Paul arrived in the very large and important city of Ephesus. Ephesus was famous for a large and beautiful temple built to honour the goddess Artemis. Many people there worshipped false gods and others practiced sorcery.

When Paul arrived at the city of Ephesus he met a group of disciples. Disciples are followers of Jesus. As Paul listened to them he realised that they only knew part of the truth about baptism. They only knew about the baptism of John the Baptist which was to prepare God's people for the coming of the Messiah.

Paul explained to them that now, because of Jesus' death and resurrection, they could be part of God's new people through the forgiveness of sins by being baptised "in the name of Jesus".

In addition to forgiveness of sins at baptism, the Holy Spirit would come and live in them. The Holy Spirit would be with them all of the time helping them to follow God.

The men were so happy to hear about this and wanted to be baptised in the name of Jesus. After their baptism an amazing thing happened. The Holy Spirit displayed his wonderful power to them through two miracles.

- By the power of the Spirit the men began to immediately speak in other languages that they had never studied in a language class. This is called "speaking in tongues".
- And then they began saying messages straight from God. This miracle is called "prophesying".

These special miracles helped these men understand that God's Spirit was for everyone who chooses to follow and obey him.

It was important that these Christians saw that the Spirit of God was strong because there were many people in the city of Ephesus that did not believe in the good power of God. There were many people in Ephesus that believed in evil spirits and that the evil spirits were stronger than God.

By seeing God's Holy Spirit these Christians could know that there is no power compared to the power of the Holy

Spirit of God!

For three months Paul taught in the synagogue where the Jews gathered. He told them that the promises of God had come true and that Jesus was the Messiah who had come to save the world from sin. Some people believed but others became angry and did not believe in Jesus at all.

After this Paul started teaching in a school called the "School of Tyrannus." He taught there for two years and many people heard about Jesus during that time.

God did some amazing miracles through Paul in the city of Ephesus. If Paul touched a handkerchief and then a sick person touched it then the sick person would become well. And if they had evil spirits then the evil spirits would leave them.

If a demon lived inside a person then the demon could make the person do evil things. There were seven Jewish men passing through Ephesus and they noticed how Paul seemed to have special power over demons (evil spirits). The seven men didn't believe in Jesus but they wanted to have special powers too.

So, when they met a man who had a demon living inside of him they decided to try to use the name of Jesus like magic. They tried to make the demon leave the man by just saying the name of Jesus.

Then something very unexpected happened! The demon inside the man made the man speak. The demon said, "I know Jesus and I know Paul. But who are you?"

The men were shocked and very afraid. They realised that they did not have power over demons like Jesus did after all.

In fact, the demon caused the man to attack all seven men and beat them up. He even tore their clothes off so that the men ran out of the house naked and bleeding.

When the Holy Spirit lives inside a Christian the Holy Spirit helps a Christian be good. But an evil spirit only does evil. An evil spirit wants to hurt people.

But always remember that God is stronger than any other power in the world. If we trust in God then he will protect us. We do not have to be afraid of evil spirits.

News of this and of the other miracles spread all around Ephesus. Many realised the power of God is stronger than all of their false gods. Many who had been following magic and sorcery were afraid because the powers of magic and sorcery were nothing compared to the power of God. A number of those who had practiced sorcery even made a fire and burned their dark magic and sorcery instruction books. They trusted only in God's power now. God does not want Christians to treat other powers like they are as good as or better than him.

There were evil spirits but there was also something else very wrong with Ephesus. Everyone, even from far away cities, had heard of the big beautiful temple in Ephesus. People would go to the temple to worship but they did not go to the temple to worship Jesus or God. This whole building and big statues were built in honour of a false goddess named Artemis.

People thought Artemis of the Ephesians had power and they worshipped and bowed down to her.

Some silversmiths would make statues of Artemis or the temple and sell them at the marketplace. These statues were very popular so the silversmiths could make a lot of money selling them.

When Paul began telling people it was wrong to worship Artemis, the silversmiths began to worry that no one would want to buy their statues anymore.

One silversmith, Demetrius, became so angry about this that he started telling all the other silversmiths. He said that if people started believing what Paul said about Jesus then all the silversmiths would become poor and go out of business.

More and more people started listening to Demetrius and soon there was a big angry crowd gathered at the city stadium. This was becoming a very dangerous situation for Paul and his friends.

They even grabbed two of Paul's friends and brought them into the stadium. Paul wanted to go and help them but his other friends told him that he must stay away from the angry crowd.

When one Jewish man tried to talk, the crowd got so angry that they responded by chanting this for two hours straight, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

The entire city was in an uproar. Finally, the city clerk calmed them down enough so they could hear him speak. He reminded them that there were city courts where Demetrius and the other silversmiths could make their complaints. He also told them that if they had a riot then he would have to report it to the Romans. (That meant Roman soldiers would come and everyone would be in big trouble.)

Finally, everyone calmed down and began returning to their homes. But Paul knew the time had come to leave Ephesus. There were now many Christians in Ephesus and they could continue telling people about Jesus.

Paul met with his friends and then left the city. He would continue his mission work in other places.

[top](#)

Ways to Tell the Story:

This story can be told using a variety of methods. Always remain true to the facts found in the Bible but help children connect to its meaning by using drama, visual aids, voice inflection, student interaction and/or emotion. [Click here for visual aids and story-telling methods.](#)

[Click here to download the slideshow](#) or [click here for the printable illustrations.](#)

Be selective. Each teacher is unique so only use the illustrations that best relate to the way YOU are telling the story in THIS lesson. Too many illustrations can be confusing so eliminate any that cover other stories or details you do not wish to emphasise in this lesson.

Or use the video below.

Review Questions:

1. What was the name of the city where Paul spent two years teaching in a school? Ephesus
2. What did the sorcerers and magicians in Ephesus do with their expensive scrolls and books? Burned them
3. Why did the sorcerers and magicians in Ephesus burn their scrolls and books? They learned that God is the only real power.
4. Why is it wrong to trust sorcery, horoscopes, witchcraft, and things like that? Because only God has the real power and he wants us to trust in Him.

Song Suggestions:

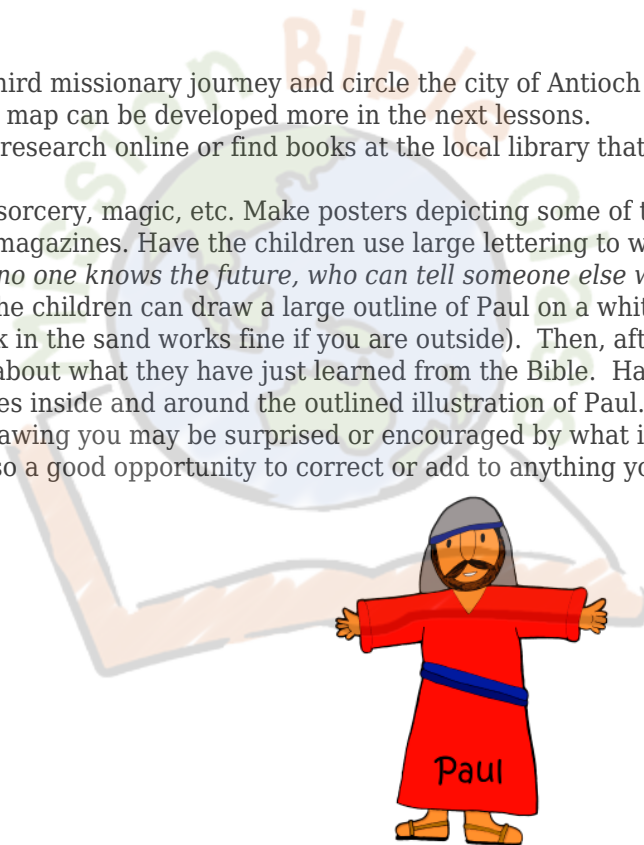
- [My God is So Big Song](#)
- [He's Got the Whole World in His Hands Song](#)
- [Oh Be Careful Song](#)
- [Shake the Devil Off](#)
- [Roll the Gospel Chariot](#)
- [I Can Be a Missionary](#)
- [This Little Light of Mine](#)
- Refer to the [Song Page](#) on this website for more options.

Learning Activities and Crafts:

[\(How to choose the best learning activities for my teaching situation\)](#)

Activities:

- Enlarge a map of Paul's third missionary journey and circle the city of Antioch where the journey began. Then circle Ephesus. This map can be developed more in the next lessons.
- Use a bible concordance, research online or find books at the local library that discuss the ancient city of Ephesus
- Discuss modern forms of sorcery, magic, etc. Make posters depicting some of these. You might glue on horoscope columns from magazines. Have the children use large lettering to write the words of Ecclesiastes 8:7 on the poster. *"Since no one knows the future, who can tell someone else what is to come? NIV"*
- To review, either you or the children can draw a large outline of Paul on a whiteboard or piece of paper (even drawing with a stick in the sand works fine if you are outside). Then, after you have taught the lesson ask the children to think about what they have just learned from the Bible. Have them write descriptive words and/or draw pictures inside and around the outlined illustration of Paul. When you see what the children are writing or drawing you may be surprised or encouraged by what insights they have picked up from the story. This is also a good opportunity to correct or add to anything you might not have covered as



well as you could have when you were teaching.

If you prefer, you can [download and print the illustration of Paul provided here](#) and then have the children write and draw on it for the review.

- Alternatively, if you are teaching a series of lessons about Paul then you might draw an outline of him on a large poster or paper and then add descriptive words about him each time you study a new lesson.
- [Click here for the 16 lessons about the Life of Paul grouped together as a set.](#)

Crafts:

- Make a relief map of Paul's Journeys featuring the place in today's story. If you are studying about Paul's journeys over a few lessons then you could add more details to the map each time you learn about another

- stop on the journey. Instructions on how to make a relief map at <http://www.squidoo.com/salt-dough-maps>
- [Make a scroll. Click here for instructions.](#) Have children write "God is the Only True Power" on it. They could write other powers (sorcery, magic, horoscopes) around the edges in small lettering and then cross them out.

Check the [Teaching Ideas](#) page on this website for ideas that are adaptable to any lesson.



[Click here for "Paul's 3rd Journey-Ephesus" printables to print \(A4 paper\)](#)
[Click here for "Paul's 3rd Journey-Ephesus" to print \(Letter size-USA\)](#)
[top](#)

Other Online Resources:

- [Colouring page and puzzle worksheets \(Calvary Curriculum\)](#)
- [Map of Paul's 3rd journey \(deeperstudy.com\)](#)
- [Craft: Doorknob hanger of Paul \(sundayschoolcrafts.net\)](#)
- [\(The Riot\) A good selection of puzzles and games to print \(gardenofpraise.com\)](#)
- [Review: Create a "passport" that covers the life of Paul. Good visual ideas and activities. Could be split up to go with several lessons or taught all together as a review of previous lessons concerning Paul found at \(kidsbibledebjackson.blogspot.co.nz\)](#)

<https://www.pinterest.com/marynnz/paul-3rd-journey-to-rome/>
[top](#)



©Mission Bible Class 2011-2022 Copies may be made for personal and ministry purposes only.
 Not to be sold or profited from in any way. www.missionbibleclass.org