

- A Study in Acts -

Chapter Nineteen – Third Journey of Paul

ACTS 19: Intro:

We began the third journey in **Chapter 18:23**. Paul returned from the second journey to Antioch of Syria and then went out again to the region of **Galatia** and **Phrygia** strengthening the brethren in these locations; Luke tells us.

Please use this map provided.

It is in **Acts 19:1** that Luke reveals to us that Paul will come next to Ephesus. This lesson will focus on Ephesus, as Paul is going to stay here for 3 years (his own words in **Acts 20:31**).

So, before we investigate the text, let's look at this city.

Ephesus: Under Roman rule and particularly during the time that Paul would visit this city, and even later when he would have Timothy stay and work in this city; Ephesus was large, rich, and a busy port for trade opening to the main body of Asia Minor. It was designated the capital of Rome's province of Asia (the large province of Asia Minor on the southwestern edge that bordered the Aegean Sea).

In addition, Ephesus was built near the shrine of Artemis, or Diana to the Romans. This shrine had originally been an ancient temple dedicated to an Anatolian (Anatolia - the original designation for Roman Asia Minor) fertility goddess. As Hellenistic culture came to dominate these areas, their religious practices did also, and the shrine was converted to the Greek god Artemis.

Artemis was the daughter of Zeus and Leto (the twin sister of Apollo). She was the Hellenic goddess of the hunt, wild animals, wilderness, childbirth, virginity and protector of young girls, bringing and relieving disease in women.



The Artemis of Ephesus, 1st century AD (Ephesus Archaeological Museum).

The temple of Artemis was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world and would be the seat of her worship. It was not the original temple built for Artemis; that one was burned by Herostratus, in the summer of 356 BC, supposedly the same night that Alexander the Great was born. This temple, when Paul would come to Ephesus, had been rebuilt. It was the size of a football field and was supposed to be made of marble.



This model of the Temple of Artemis, at Miniaturk Park, Istanbul, Turkey, attempts to recreate the probable appearance of the first temple.

Inside was a bizarre statue of the "fertility" idol, the original of which was apparently carved from a meteorite that had "**fallen from heaven**" (**Acts 19:35**); as the city clerk would claim was known by all.

Here is an excerpt from - bibleencyclopedia.com

“At the head of her cult was a chief priest, originally a eunuch who bore the name and later the title Megabyzos. Under him were priests known as Essenes, appointed, perhaps from the city officials, for but a single year; it was their duty to offer the sacrifices to the goddess on behalf of the city. Other subordinate classes of priests known as Kouretes, Krobatai and Hilroi performed duties which are now obscure. The priestesses were even more numerous, and, probably from their great numbers, they were called Melissai or bees; the Ephesian symbol therefore which appears commonly upon the coins struck in the city, is a bee. The Melissai, which in the early times were all virgins, were of three classes; it is no longer known just what the special duties of each class were. The ritual of the temple services consisted of sacrifices and of ceremonial prostitution, a practice which was common to many of the religions of the ancient Orient, and which still exists among some of the obscure tribes of Asia Minor.”

In this, the city of Ephesus shared a very similar kinship with Corinth and the temple of Aphrodite found there, which weighed heavily on the morality of these cities.

This temple brought pilgrims from all over the world to this center of trade, adding to its allure. In addition, it created a vast business for those who made and sold silver talismans and images for these pilgrims to buy up.



Above is a coin with the image engraved and a statue that would have been offered to the pilgrims to purchase.

We will additionally be introduced to the school of Tyrannus (**Acts 19:9**). Some have believed that it was a privately owned school of Greek language and culture (probable); while others thought it may be a privately owned synagogue (not very likely, as Paul would go there post the

rejection of his teaching by the Jews). The truth is that it cannot be substantiated beyond a shadow of a doubt either way.

This will give us a good mental picture of the city that Paul is going to spend a great deal of time in. We will additionally have more written in the New Testament about, or to the Body of Christ that will be established by the Gospel of Jesus Christ here, than virtually any other Body of Christ, apart from Jerusalem.

Next: “Disciples of John!”