

**THE CHURCH'S WITNESS TO THE WORLD:
Paul's Third Missionary Journey - Acts 18:23-21:16**

Memory Verse: *"I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus" (Acts 20:21 NIV).*

Background Helps:

The city of Ephesus, located in Asia (the west coast province of Asia Minor, modern-day Turkey), was the center of Paul's activities on his third missionary journey. Sketch the development of the church in Ephesus and throughout Asia:

1. Paul's first visit - Acts 18:19-21
2. Apollos' ministry - Acts 18:24-26
3. Paul's 3-year ministry - Acts 19
 - a. To 12 men deficient in their knowledge of Christian truth (vv. 1-7)
 - b. In the Jewish synagogue for 3 months (v. 8)
 - c. In the school of Tyrannus (vv. 9, 10)
 - d. A miraculous ministry of healing (vv. 11, 12)
 - e. Impact of Paul's ministry upon occult practices (vv. 13-20)
 - f. Impact of Paul's ministry upon false religion (vv. 23-41)
4. Paul's address to the Ephesian elders - Acts 20:16-38

Notice the impact of the work in Ephesus upon all of the province of Asia: Acts 19:10, 20, 26. It seems probable that the other churches of Asia, mentioned elsewhere in the New Testament, trace their origin to this ministry of Paul in Ephesus - the churches at Colossae, Laodicea, Hierapolis, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia. (See Colossians 2:1, 13, 16 and Rev. 1:11.)

The church in Ephesus itself figures very prominently in the rest of the New Testament. See Paul's letters to the Ephesians and to Timothy at Ephesus (I and II Timothy); and see John's letters to Ephesus in Revelation 2:1-7 and his three letters (probably) written from Ephesus - I, II, and III John.

Lesson Helps:

Two alternative lesson plans:

My aim is to teach my students about the great impact of Paul's ministry in Ephesus so that we will pray and work toward our church having this same kind of impact in our state. Use a map to trace the impact of Paul's ministry in Ephesus and the spread of the Gospel throughout Asia. Use a R.I. map to trace the growth of Christ's church here. Then pray for the further extension of Christ's Kingdom. Discuss: What can we be doing to see to the further growth of the church in our state?

My aim is to teach my students about Paul's address to the Ephesian elders so that they will follow his teaching and example in their own service for Christ. From the passage, have your class dig out a list of principles for Christian service, according to what they learn from Paul's example and from Paul's instructions.

HOW TO SERVE CHRIST

Paul's example

Paul's instructions

etc.

etc.

Notice that some of these principles have to do with inward attitude and others with outward conduct. Have your class distinguish between them.

Application:

Challenge your class about their service for Christ. Have each one share (or write down) one way in which he/she needs to improve as a servant of Christ. Close with a time of prayer.

Home Assignment:

 Read Acts 21:17-23:35

 Memorize I Corinthians 9:22b (NIV)