

## **The Church in Ephesus in the Book of Acts**

*Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,  
To God's holy people in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus:  
Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Ephesians 1:1-2 (New International Version)

*This letter is from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus.  
I am writing to God's holy people in Ephesus, who are faithful followers of Christ Jesus.  
May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace*

Ephesians 1:1-2 (New Living Translation)

## **Priscilla, Aquila, Apollos and Paul in Ephesus**

Acts 18:18-26, 19:1-12 (New International Version)

<sup>18</sup> Paul stayed on in Corinth for some time. Then he left the brothers and sisters and sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila. <sup>19</sup> They arrived at Ephesus, where Paul left Priscilla and Aquila. He himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. <sup>20</sup> When they asked him to spend more time with them, he declined. <sup>21</sup> But as he left, he promised, "I will come back if it is God's will." Then he set sail from Ephesus. <sup>22</sup> When he landed at Caesarea, he went up to Jerusalem and greeted the church and then went down to Antioch.

<sup>23</sup> After spending some time in Antioch, Paul set out from there and travelled from place to place throughout the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.

<sup>24</sup> Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. <sup>25</sup> He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervour and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John. <sup>26</sup> He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately.

**19** While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples <sup>2</sup> and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"

They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."

<sup>3</sup> So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?"

"John's baptism," they replied.

<sup>4</sup> Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." <sup>5</sup> On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. <sup>6</sup> When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. <sup>7</sup> There were about twelve men in all.

<sup>8</sup> Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. <sup>9</sup> But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. <sup>10</sup> This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.

<sup>11</sup> God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, <sup>12</sup> 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.

## The Riot in Ephesus

Acts 19:13-21, 23-41 (New International Version)

<sup>13</sup> Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, "In the name of the Jesus whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out." <sup>14</sup> Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. <sup>15</sup> One day the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know about, but who are you?" <sup>16</sup> Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding.

<sup>17</sup> When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honour. <sup>18</sup> Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed what they had done. <sup>19</sup> A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas. <sup>20</sup> In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.

<sup>21</sup> After all this had happened, Paul decided to go to Jerusalem, passing through Macedonia and Achaia. "After I have been there," he said, "I must visit Rome also."

<sup>23</sup> About that time there arose a great disturbance about the Way. <sup>24</sup> A silversmith named Demetrius, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought in a lot of business for the craftsmen there. <sup>25</sup> He called them together, along with the workers in related trades, and said: "You know, my friends, that we receive a good income from this business. <sup>26</sup> And you see and hear how this fellow Paul has convinced and led astray large numbers of people here in Ephesus and in practically the whole province of Asia. He says that gods made by human hands are no gods at all. <sup>27</sup> There is danger not only that our trade will lose its good name, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited; and the goddess herself, who is worshiped throughout the province of Asia and the world, will be robbed of her divine majesty."

<sup>28</sup> When they heard this, they were furious and began shouting: "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" <sup>29</sup> Soon the whole city was in an uproar. The people seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's traveling companions from Macedonia, and all of them rushed into the theatre together. <sup>30</sup> Paul wanted to appear before the crowd, but the disciples would not let him. <sup>31</sup> Even some of the officials of the province, friends of Paul, sent him a message begging him not to venture into the theatre.

<sup>32</sup> The assembly was in confusion: Some were shouting one thing, some another. Most of the people did not even know why they were there. <sup>33</sup> The Jews in the crowd pushed Alexander to the front, and they shouted instructions to him. He motioned for silence in order to make a defence before the people. <sup>34</sup> But when they realized he was a Jew, they all shouted in unison for about two hours: "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

<sup>35</sup> The city clerk quieted the crowd and said: "Fellow Ephesians, doesn't all the world know that the city of Ephesus is the guardian of the temple of the great Artemis and of her image, which fell from heaven? <sup>36</sup> Therefore, since these facts are undeniable, you ought to calm down and not do anything rash. <sup>37</sup> You have brought these men here, though they have neither robbed temples nor blasphemed our goddess. <sup>38</sup> If, then, Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a grievance against anybody, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. They can press charges. <sup>39</sup> If there is anything further you want to bring up, it must be settled in a legal assembly. <sup>40</sup> As it is, we are in danger of being charged with rioting because of what happened today. In that case we would not be able to account for this commotion, since there is no reason for it." <sup>41</sup> After he had said this, he dismissed the assembly.

## **Paul's Farewell to the Ephesian Elders**

Acts 20:13-38 (New International Version)

<sup>13</sup> We went on ahead to the ship and sailed for Assos, where we were going to take Paul aboard. He had made this arrangement because he was going there on foot. <sup>14</sup> When he met us at Assos, we took him aboard and went on to Mitylene. <sup>15</sup> The next day we set sail from there and arrived off Chios. The day after that we crossed over to Samos, and on the following day arrived at Miletus. <sup>16</sup> Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus to avoid spending time in the province of Asia, for he was in a hurry to reach Jerusalem, if possible, by the day of Pentecost.

<sup>17</sup> From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church. <sup>18</sup> When they arrived, he said to them: "You know how I lived the whole time I was with you, from the first day I came into the province of Asia. <sup>19</sup> I served the Lord with great humility and with tears and in the midst of severe testing by the plots of my Jewish opponents. <sup>20</sup> You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house. <sup>21</sup> I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.

<sup>22</sup> "And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. <sup>23</sup> I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. <sup>24</sup> However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace.

<sup>25</sup> "Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again. <sup>26</sup> Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of any of you. <sup>27</sup> For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God. <sup>28</sup> Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. <sup>29</sup> I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. <sup>30</sup> Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. <sup>31</sup> So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.

<sup>32</sup> "Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. <sup>33</sup> I have not coveted anyone's silver or gold or clothing. <sup>34</sup> You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. <sup>35</sup> In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

<sup>36</sup> When Paul had finished speaking, he knelt down with all of them and prayed. <sup>37</sup> They all wept as they embraced him and kissed him. <sup>38</sup> What grieved them most was his statement that they would never see his face again. Then they accompanied him to the ship.

## **Priscilla, Aquila, Apollos and Paul in Ephesus**

Acts 18:18-26, 19:1-12 (New Living Translation)

<sup>18</sup> Paul stayed in Corinth for some time after that, then said good-bye to the brothers and sisters<sup>[a]</sup> and went to nearby Cenchrea. Then he set sail for Syria, taking Priscilla and Aquila with him.

<sup>19</sup> They stopped first at the port of Ephesus, where Paul left the others behind. While he was there, he went to the synagogue to reason with the Jews. <sup>20</sup> They asked him to stay longer, but he declined. <sup>21</sup> As he left, however, he said, “I will come back later, God willing.” Then he set sail from Ephesus. <sup>22</sup> The next stop was at the port of Caesarea. From there he went up and visited the church at Jerusalem<sup>[c]</sup> and then went back to Antioch.

<sup>23</sup> After spending some time in Antioch, Paul went back through Galatia and Phrygia, visiting and strengthening all the believers.

<sup>24</sup> Meanwhile, a Jew named Apollos, an eloquent speaker who knew the Scriptures well, had arrived in Ephesus from Alexandria in Egypt. <sup>25</sup> He had been taught the way of the Lord, and he taught others about Jesus with an enthusiastic spirit and with accuracy. However, he knew only about John’s baptism. <sup>26</sup> When Priscilla and Aquila heard him preaching boldly in the synagogue, they took him aside and explained the way of God even more accurately.

**19** While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul travelled through the interior regions until he reached Ephesus, on the coast, where he found several believers. <sup>2</sup> “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.”

<sup>3</sup> “Then what baptism did you experience?” he asked.

And they replied, “The baptism of John.”

<sup>4</sup> 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.”

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

<sup>8</sup> Then Paul went to the synagogue and preached boldly for the next three months, arguing persuasively about the Kingdom of God. <sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> 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.

<sup>11</sup> God gave Paul the power to perform unusual miracles. <sup>12</sup> 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.

## The Riot in Ephesus

Acts 19:13-21, 23-41 (New Living Translation)

<sup>13</sup> 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!” <sup>14</sup> Seven sons of Sceva, a leading priest, were doing this. <sup>15</sup> But one time when they tried it, the evil spirit replied, “I know Jesus, and I know Paul, but who are you?” <sup>16</sup> 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.

<sup>17</sup> 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 honoured. <sup>18</sup> Many who became believers confessed their sinful practices. <sup>19</sup> 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. <sup>20</sup> So the message about the Lord spread widely and had a powerful effect.

<sup>21</sup> 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!”

<sup>23</sup> About that time, serious trouble developed in Ephesus concerning the Way. <sup>24</sup> It began with Demetrius, a silversmith who had a large business manufacturing silver shrines of the Greek goddess Artemis. He kept many craftsmen busy. <sup>25</sup> 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. <sup>26</sup> 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! <sup>27</sup> 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!”

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

<sup>32</sup> 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. <sup>33</sup> The Jews in the crowd pushed Alexander forward and told him to explain the situation. He motioned for silence and tried to speak. <sup>34</sup> But when the crowd realized he was a Jew, they started shouting again and kept it up for about two hours: “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians! Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!”

<sup>35</sup> 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. <sup>36</sup> Since this is an undeniable fact, you should stay calm and not do anything rash. <sup>37</sup> You have brought these men here, but they have stolen nothing from the temple and have not spoken against our goddess.

<sup>38</sup> “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. <sup>39</sup> And if there are complaints about other matters, they can be settled in a legal assembly. <sup>40</sup> 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.” <sup>41</sup> Then he dismissed them, and they dispersed.

## **Paul's Farewell to the Ephesian Elders**

Acts 20:13-38 (New Living Translation)

<sup>13</sup> Paul went by land to Assos, where he had arranged for us to join him, while we travelled by ship. <sup>14</sup> He joined us there, and we sailed together to Mitylene. <sup>15</sup> The next day we sailed past the island of Kios. The following day we crossed to the island of Samos, and a day later we arrived at Miletus.

<sup>16</sup> Paul had decided to sail on past Ephesus, for he didn't want to spend any more time in the province of Asia. He was hurrying to get to Jerusalem, if possible, in time for the Festival of Pentecost. <sup>17</sup> But when we landed at Miletus, he sent a message to the elders of the church at Ephesus, asking them to come and meet him.

<sup>18</sup> When they arrived he declared, "You know that from the day I set foot in the province of Asia until now <sup>19</sup> I have done the Lord's work humbly and with many tears. I have endured the trials that came to me from the plots of the Jews. <sup>20</sup> I never shrank back from telling you what you needed to hear, either publicly or in your homes. <sup>21</sup> I have had one message for Jews and Greeks alike—the necessity of repenting from sin and turning to God, and of having faith in our Lord Jesus.

<sup>22</sup> "And now I am bound by the Spirit to go to Jerusalem. I don't know what awaits me, <sup>23</sup> except that the Holy Spirit tells me in city after city that jail and suffering lie ahead. <sup>24</sup> But my life is worth nothing to me unless I use it for finishing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus—the work of telling others the Good News about the wonderful grace of God.

<sup>25</sup> "And now I know that none of you to whom I have preached the Kingdom will ever see me again. <sup>26</sup> I declare today that I have been faithful. If anyone suffers eternal death, it's not my fault,<sup>[c]</sup> <sup>27</sup> for I didn't shrink from declaring all that God wants you to know.

<sup>28</sup> "So guard yourselves and God's people. Feed and shepherd God's flock—his church, purchased with his own blood—over which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as leaders. <sup>29</sup> I know that false teachers, like vicious wolves, will come in among you after I leave, not sparing the flock. <sup>30</sup> Even some men from your own group will rise up and distort the truth in order to draw a following. <sup>31</sup> Watch out! Remember the three years I was with you—my constant watch and care over you night and day, and my many tears for you.

<sup>32</sup> "And now I entrust you to God and the message of his grace that is able to build you up and give you an inheritance with all those he has set apart for himself.

<sup>33</sup> "I have never coveted anyone's silver or gold or fine clothes. <sup>34</sup> You know that these hands of mine have worked to supply my own needs and even the needs of those who were with me. <sup>35</sup> And I have been a constant example of how you can help those in need by working hard. You should remember the words of the Lord Jesus: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

<sup>36</sup> When he had finished speaking, he knelt and prayed with them. <sup>37</sup> They all cried as they embraced and kissed him good-bye. <sup>38</sup> They were sad most of all because he had said that they would never see him again. Then they escorted him down to the ship.

