

# Women's Bible Study

A TWO-YEAR JOURNEY THROUGH  
THE STORY OF GOD

## Week 7 | Unleashed through Relationships | Acts 18:23-21:14

As Paul traveled from Corinth to Antioch, he left his co-workers Priscilla and Aquila at Ephesus.

### 1. APOLLOS, PRISCILLA, and AQUILA Read Acts 18:23-28

In Paul's absence, an eloquent teacher named Apollos arrived at Ephesus and began speaking in the synagogue. Although Apollos taught about Jesus accurately, there were important aspects of Christian faith that he had not been taught.

- a. When Priscilla and Aquila realized that his understanding was incomplete, what did they do? 18:26
  - b. How did that serve to advance the gospel? 18:27-28
  - c. Personal Reflection: Proverbs 15:1 says, "*A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.*" The believers at Ephesus did not reject Apollos; rather, they nurtured him and encouraged him. How does Priscilla and Aquila's example demonstrate how differences in the church may be resolved peacefully? How did both the church and Apollos benefit from this wise course of action?
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- ### 2. THE EPHESIANS Acts 19
- Paul returns to Ephesus to teach the good news about Jesus. Many believe the gospel, but others resist and oppose him.

#### **Twelve disciples of John the Baptist:** Read Acts 19:1-7

- a. When Paul returned to Ephesus, he encountered twelve men who were disciples of John the Baptist. What had been John the Baptist's message? Acts 19:4; see also Luke 3:16
- b. When these men heard that Jesus was, in fact, the promised Messiah of whom John the Baptist had spoken, what was their response? 19:5-7

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- c. In what way does this encounter resemble the events of Pentecost? See Acts 2:1-4

## **The Jewish Community:** Read Acts 19:8-10

Paul taught about Jesus and the Kingdom of God for three months in the synagogue at Ephesus.

- a. When Paul encountered unyielding opposition from Jews in the synagogue, what did he do? 19:9
- b. How did this result in the spread of the gospel? 19:9-10

## **The Opposition of Occult Power** Read Acts 19:11-20

- a. The pagan culture of Ephesus was characterized by the practice of magic arts and faith in magical spells. In a culture where demonic power was evident, how did the Holy Spirit demonstrate God's greater power? 19:11-12
- b. How did the power of the gospel prevail over the power of demonic activity? 19:17-19
- c. What was the final result of this conflict between God and Satan's forces? 19:20
- d. Personal reflection: It is easy in our permissive culture to drift into a casual participation in elements of the occult: astrology, palm-reading, Tarot cards—even some yoga classes have elements of pagan worship embedded in them. As you look at 19:18-19, consider how such practices are viewed by the early church. Is this an area of life where you should take steps to establish spiritual purity?

## **The Cult of Artemis** Read Acts 19:23-41

Paul and the churches at Ephesus faced frightening opposition from yet another source.

- a. What was the motive for this uprising? 19:24-25
- b. How did the gospel message affect the livelihood of the tradesmen? 19:26

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- c. How did Demetrius mischaracterize Paul's teaching so that it would be perceived as a threat to the entire city? 19:27
- d. What was the terrifying result of Demetrius' exaggerated claims? 19:28-29
- e. What was the danger that Paul faced from this? 19:30-31
- f. How would you characterize the chaos that followed? 19:32-34

God used the rational, persuasive argument of the town clerk (mayor) of Ephesus to calm the crowd and disperse the protesters.

- g. What were the arguments made by the town clerk?
  - With respect to the reputation of the city? 35-36
  - With respect to the intent of the Christian missionaries? Vs. 37
  - With respect to the appropriate procedure for complaints? 38-39
  - With respect to the greater danger that faced the city at that moment? Vs. 40
- h. Personal reflection: God is able to use non-Christians as well as Christians to accomplish his good purposes in the world. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, it was a non-Jew—a Samaritan—who saved the life of the naked, beaten man by the road. God can provide deliverance from unexpected sources. Let this be a comfort to you as you encounter difficulties in your life.

### 3. FRIENDS ON THE JOURNEY Acts 20:1-21:14

After the uproar, Paul left Ephesus, heading westward. He visited several cities ending in Greece before heading back, following a plan to return to Jerusalem in time for the celebration of Pentecost. So, although he wanted to see the leaders of the church in Ephesus, he could not afford to make a detour to the city where he recently spent 3 years of his life. Instead he sent them word to meet him at Miletus, his nearest port of call to them.

- a. Why was Paul going to Jerusalem? 20:22

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- b. What had been revealed to him about what would happen there? 20:22-23
- c. What was Paul's firm conviction about his life and his purpose? 20:24
- d. Personal reflection: Consider Paul's perspective. We live in an age of abundant opportunities for material wealth, entertainment, success, and personal influence. Not very many of us live our lives with the perspective Paul had. Search your heart...would you be willing to live from this day forward a life dedicated to serving God's purposes rather than your own? Would you be willing to pray that the Holy Spirit will shape your heart to love God in that way? Take a moment to pray and to present this possibility to God. Ask Him to make it so.
- e. What was Paul's confident statement about the significance of his work among them? 20:25-27
- f. What responsibility did Paul give to these elders from Ephesus? 20:28
- g. What deadly challenge would they soon face? 20:29-32
- h. What was Paul's instruction concerning money? 20:33-35

Read Act 21:1-14 As Paul continues on his journey to Jerusalem, he repeatedly hears warnings about what he will encounter in Jerusalem.

- i. What is his response? 21:13.
- j. Personal Reflection: God has not promised us an easy life or a trouble-free life. God's people suffer harm, and God's people may suffer physical death at the hands of evil men. Nevertheless, our destiny is sure. What is that destiny? What is our future? Read Revelation 21-22. This is God's ultimate purpose for your life.

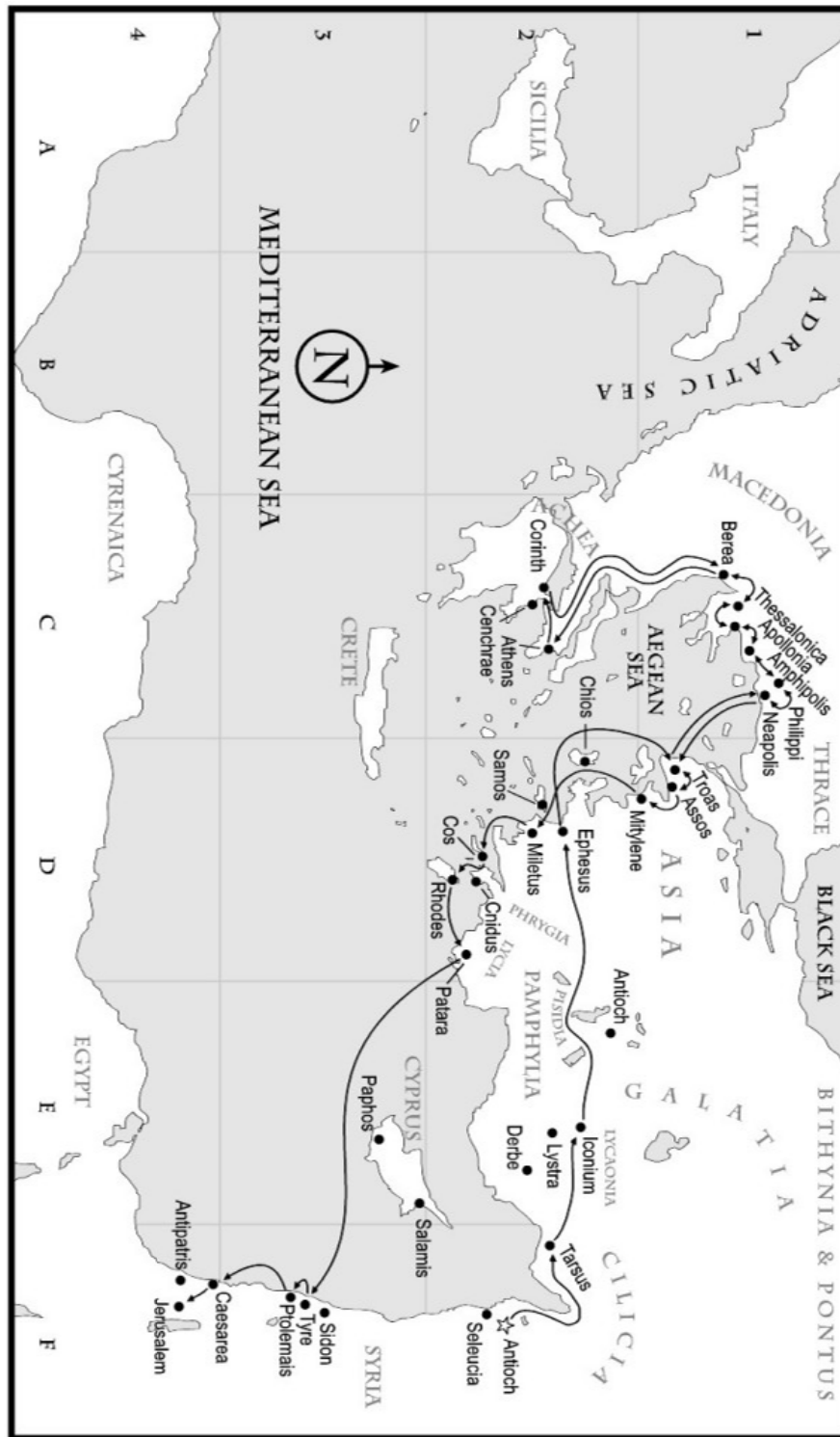
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Biblical Studies Press. (2005). The NET Bible First Edition. Bible. English. NET Bible.; The NET Bible. Biblical Studies Press.

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