

The First-Century Church  
"The Church in Ephesus"

Introduction:

1. The New Testament contains a tremendous amount of information that was written "about" as well as "to" various congregations in the first century.
2. By examining this information we can learn the Lord's will for His church today.
3. Many passages relate to the church in Ephesus.
  - a. We read about the establishment of this congregation in Acts 18-19.
  - b. The apostle Paul wrote a letter to this congregation [Ephesians].
  - c. The Lord also sent a message to this congregation (Revelation 2:1-7).
4. This lesson is a study of the establishment of the church in Ephesus.
5. Several practical lessons are revealed in the information recorded in Acts 18-19.
  - a. God works providentially in His church.
  - b. There is one way to enter the church.
  - c. The church will sometimes face opposition.

Discussion:

- I. (Acts 18:18-21) PAUL PAID A BRIEF VISIT TO EPHEBUS
  - A. After spending a considerable amount of time in Corinth, Paul traveled to Ephesus with Priscilla and Aquila.
  - B. Paul followed his custom of reasoning with the Jews in the synagogue.
  - C. Although the people in Ephesus wanted Paul to remain there for a longer time, he left with the understanding that he would return, Lord willing.
- II. (Acts 18:24-28) APOLLOS WENT TO EPHEBUS
  - A. (vs.24-25) Apollos was very talented; however, his knowledge was lacking.
  - B. (vs.26) Aquila and Priscilla taught Apollos the things he needed to know.
  - C. (vs.27-28) Apollos served the Lord effectively when he left Ephesus.
  - D. When Paul left Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus, God's providence was at work.
- III. (Acts 19:1-7) PAUL RETURNED TO EPHEBUS
  - A. (vs.1) After returning to Ephesus, Paul found a group of disciples.
  - B. (vs.2-3) Paul learned that these people had been baptized with John's baptism.
  - C. (vs.4) Paul showed them why John's baptism was no longer valid.
  - D. (vs.5) These men "*were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.*"
  - E. (vs.6-7) Paul laid his hands upon them, giving them the ability to exercise spiritual gifts.
  - F. Once again, God's providence was at work, but we also learn that there is one way to enter the church (1 Corinthians 12:13).
- IV. (Acts 19:8-41) AS PAUL CONTINUED PREACHING IN EPHEBUS, OPPOSITION DEVELOPED
  - A. (vs.8-20) Paul enjoyed great success in Ephesus.
  - B. (vs.21-41) Demetrius stirred up the people in Ephesus against Paul and Christianity.
  - C. When a congregation serves the Lord faithfully, opposition may arise; however, it can be overcome with God's help (James 4:7).