

## **Who is the Artemis mentioned in the Bible?**

Artemis was a goddess worshiped in the ancient world. The Greeks considered her the twin sister of Apollo. (Latinized as "Diana").

The Ephesian Artemis was a "queen of heaven".

A unique mythology sprang up around the origin of Artemis worship. The account is alluded to by the city clerk of Ephesus: "Doesn't all the world know that the city of Ephesus is the guardian of the temple of the great Artemis and her image, which fell from heaven?" (Acts 19:35). A popular item to sell tourists was a small Artemis shrine - a cupped enclosure with a small female figure inside. Worshipers were told they could take this shrine anywhere in the world and worship Artemis in front of her tiny shrine, and it would be just the same as worshiping her at the Ephesian Temple.

**Paul spent years in Ephesus (Acts 19:10) and performed "extraordinary miracles" there (verse 11). The gospel began to change the lives, and "a number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly... In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power" (verses 19-20). As the gospel made inroads into territory claimed by Artemis, the stage was set for a confrontation with the scriptural forces of darkness.**

As the followers of Artemis noticed the difference Paul's preaching was having in their city, "there arose a great disturbance about the Way" (Acts 19:23). A silversmith named Demetrius called a meeting of his guild and said, "You know, my friends, that we receive a good income from this business [selling Artemis shrines]. And you see and hear how this fellow Paul has convinced and led astray large number 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. 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" (verses 25-27). In his speech, Demetrius paid lip service to the "majesty" of Artemis, but his real motivation was evident - he was losing business as people stopped buying his idolatrous trinkets.

Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen stirred up the city into a riotous frenzy, shouting, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" (Acts 19:28). They led a mob to find Paul and, not finding him, grabbed two of Paul's traveling companions and dragged them to the theater. There the mob continued shouting the praise of Artemis for about two hours. (verse 34). They were only quieted when the city clerk gained an audience and reminded the mob they were breaking Roman law in disturbing the peace (verse 40).

Paul soon left Ephesus to continue his third missionary journey. **But a church had been established. In the center of Artemis worship, in a city known for paganism, immorality, and greed, the light of Jesus Christ shone brightly.**