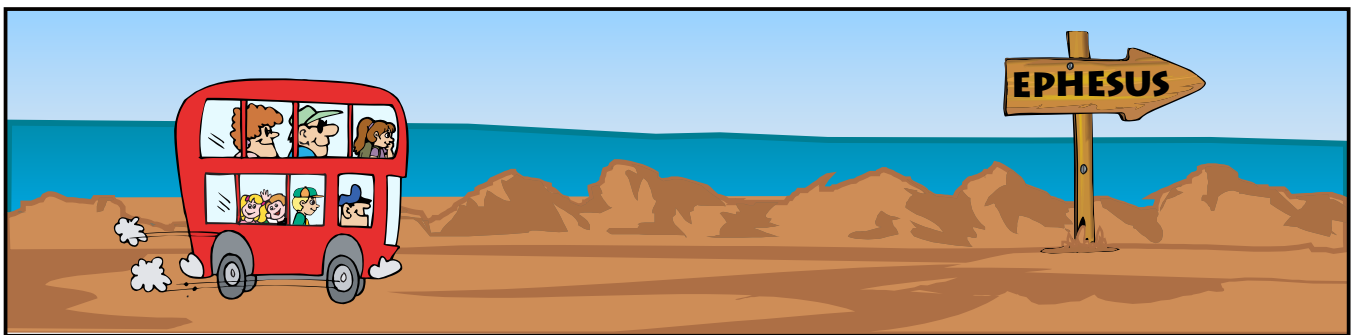


Tour of the Holy Lands - Ephesus (Part 1)



It's a bright sunny morning to drive to Ephesus (ef'e'sus), just down the coast from Smyrna. Ephesus is one of the most popular tourist places to visit these days. It was a popular city when the Apostle Paul was preaching, too. In fact, he couldn't wait to get there because he knew his preaching would reach many listeners.

But, before he made his way to Ephesus, he spent time in the city of Corinth, in Greece -- far from Ephesus. At first, he wasn't very happy there. He found the people of Corinth to be sinful, he missed his friends, and he was hungry. He wondered if it had been a mistake to come to Corinth.





Even so, Paul knew the Holy Spirit was guiding him, so he listened closely for directions as to what to do next. The idea came to him to look for a job. What could he do? Remember when we visited Paul's hometown of Tarsus a couple of summers ago? We learned that Paul once mastered the trade of tentmaking.

In short order, Paul found a job as a tentmaker in Corinth and discovered that the owners of the business were Christians. Their names were Priscilla (pri-si'la) and Aquila (a'qui-la). Paul moved in with them, and together they preached and taught the people of Corinth. They were so successful that Priscilla and Aquila's house became a church, which eventually grew to be the largest of all of Paul's churches.



A year and a half later, in the year 52 or 53, Paul, Priscilla and Aquila, along with four other friends, finally sailed to Ephesus. It took them 8-10 days to get there. We've almost arrived there ourselves. Before we head off on today's adventure, let's hear more of Paul's journey and learn about some of the best known Bible figures who lived and preached in Ephesus.



As soon as the ship pulled into shore, Paul headed for the synagogue - as usual! - where he took the opportunity to talk to the Jews. They loved what he had to say about Jesus, and begged him to stay so they could hear more.

But Paul wanted to celebrate a special feast day in Jerusalem, so he left Ephesus after just a few hours of being there. He promised the Ephesians that he would return, "God willing," and he asked Priscilla and Aquila to take over the teaching in his place. Once again, they established a church in their house, which became the center of teaching for the whole province of Asia.



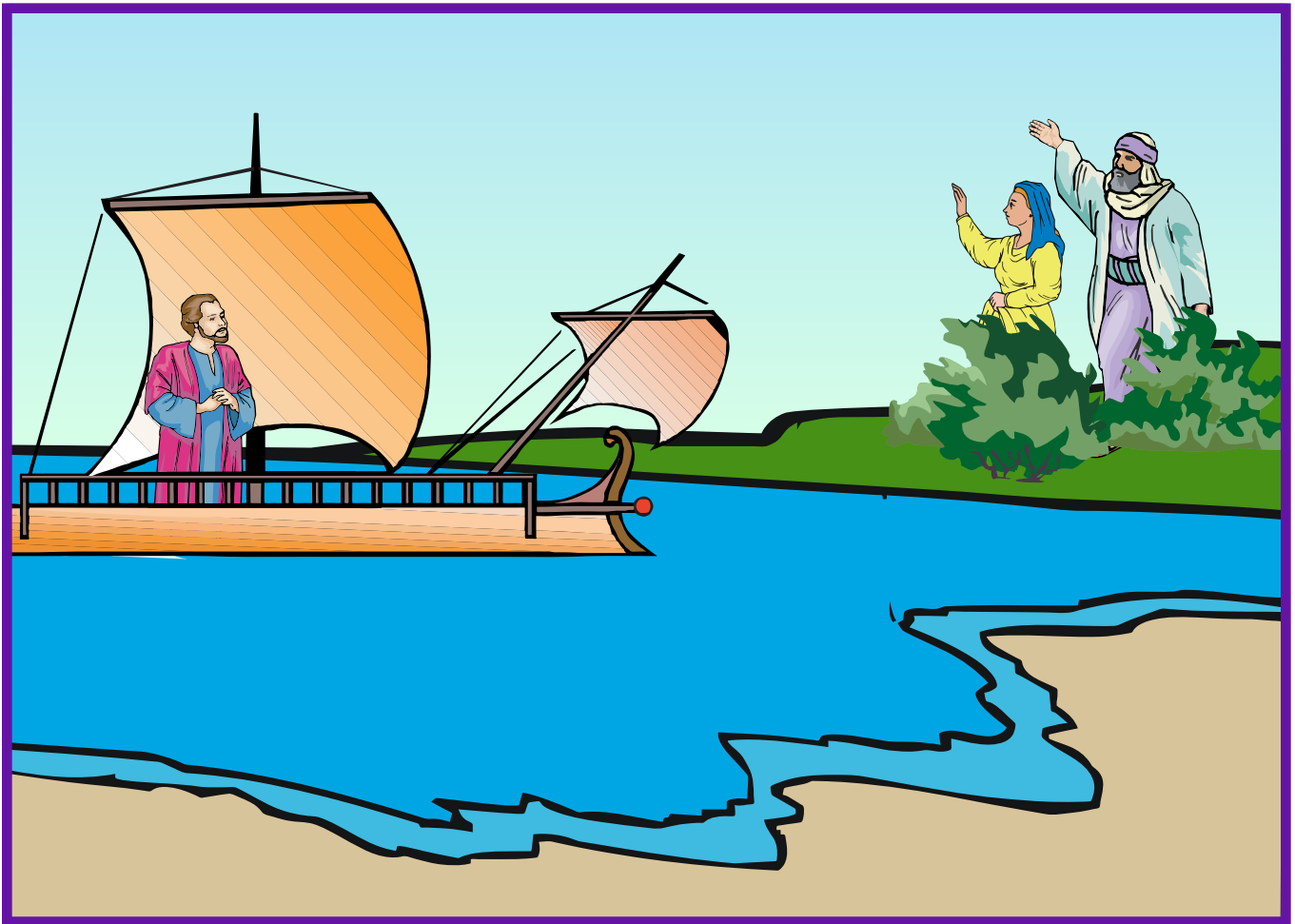
While Paul was away in Jerusalem, a newcomer came to Ephesus. His name was Apollos and he was from Alexandria, Egypt. He was a Jew, but he had heard about Jesus Christ and was convinced that he was the Messiah.



Apollos was an excellent speaker and knew the Hebrew Scriptures, so he began giving speeches in the synagogue. He taught his listeners that Jesus was the Messiah who fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament. But, he didn't tell the whole story! Historians say he left out some of the most important parts, like Jesus' crucifixion, his resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit.



When Priscilla and Aquila heard Apollos speak, they realized his speeches needed correcting. So they took him home and tutored him. It was clear that “Prisca” (Paul’s nickname for Priscilla) was the better teacher. Amazingly, she found time to run her household, weave tent cloth and explain the whole story of the Messiah to Apollos. Not only was Apollos a very intelligent man, but he was also humble and willing to allow a woman to correct his mistakes.



Apollos was a very welcome helper in the Christian church. He asked if he could go to Corinth, and Priscilla and Aquila agreed. Apollos carried letters with him, written by friends, introducing him to key people in Corinth. While he was in Greece, he was able to answer many questions asked by unbelievers. Apollos was highly regarded by all who met him. Not surprisingly, the church membership grew.



After Apollos left for Corinth, Paul returned to Ephesus from Jerusalem. He saw an unusual sight – a group of twelve men gathered together. It may have occurred as he was entering the city, just as we are now. He could hear them talking and their words troubled him. They mentioned the Messiah, but never said that Jesus was the Messiah. They had been taught that the world was still waiting for the Messiah to appear. As a result, these men didn't show any of the spirit or love that Christians express, the kind that comes from a deep sense of peace and joy rather than worry.



So Paul asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you first believed?"

They answered, "We've never heard of the Holy Spirit."

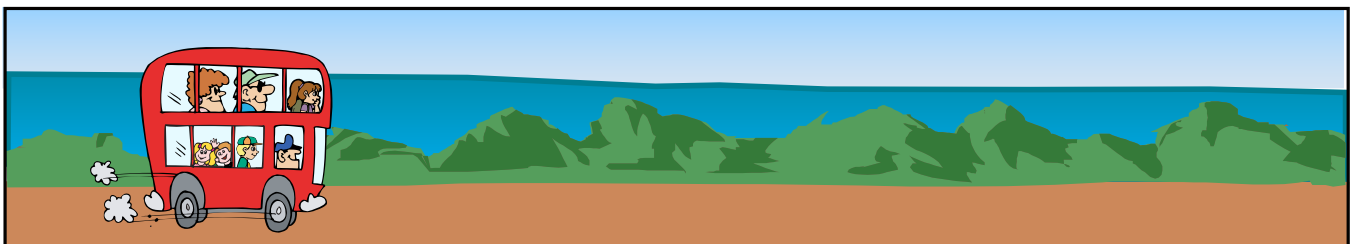
Paul asked again, "How could you be baptized, if you know nothing of the Holy Spirit?"

They answered, "We were baptized according to John's baptism."

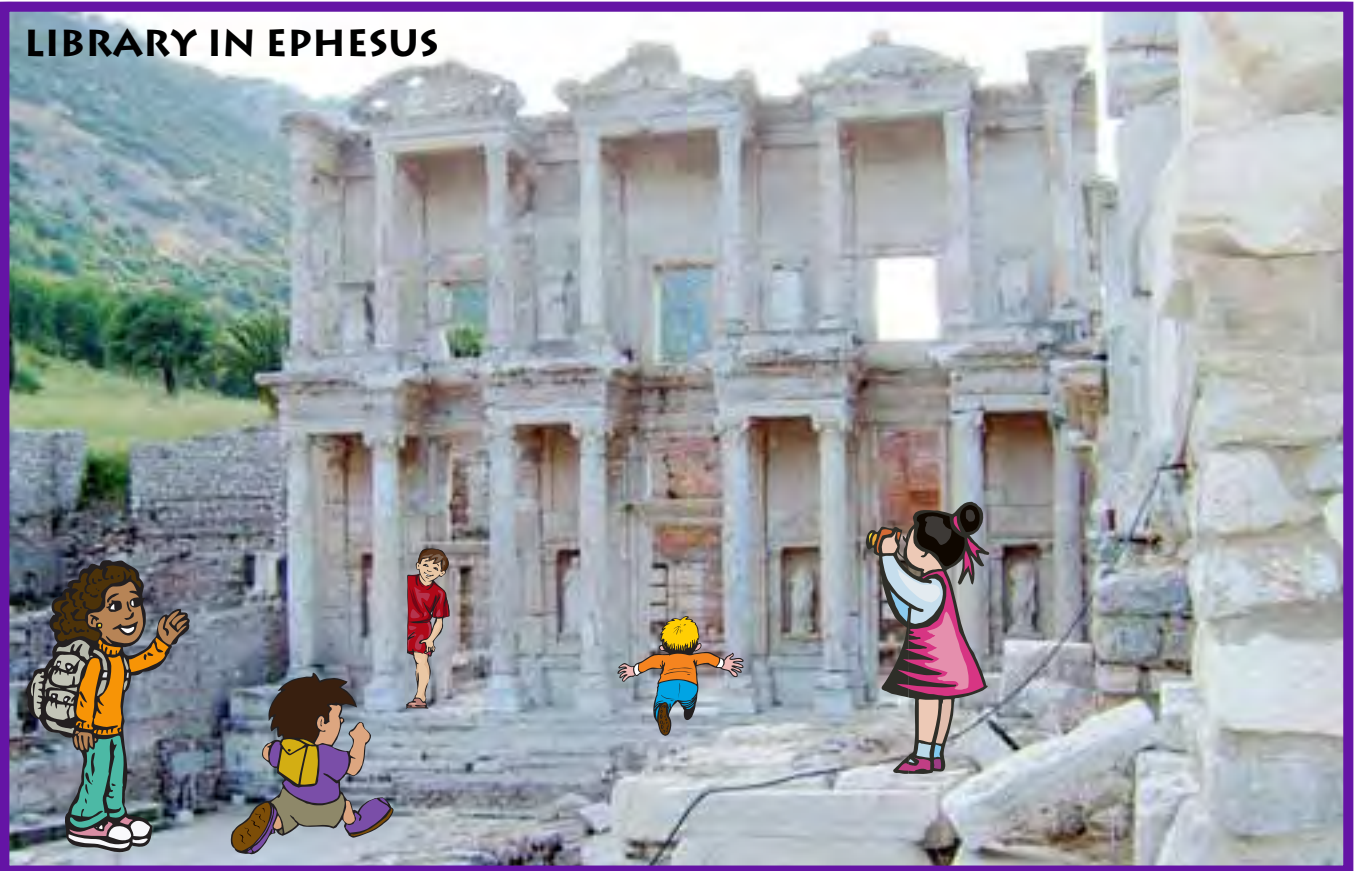
Paul then understood what was different about them. They had indeed been baptized with water by John, but they had not received the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, because they didn't yet know about Christ Jesus. They didn't realize that the Messiah had arrived and had assured them of God's love right then and there -- just as it is here and now, and always.



So, Paul told them all about Jesus Christ. The men listened eagerly, and their hearts glowed with a much deeper love for God and for His son. Then Paul laid his hands upon them, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit -- the same power that filled Jesus Christ. Immediately, the church membership in Ephesus grew by twelve. What rejoicing!



LIBRARY IN EPHEBUS



Look, we're here in Ephesus, and it's still early in the day. Are you ready for an adventure of our own? Let's get off the bus quickly, and walk to the most famous building in the city – the library. If we start now, we can beat the crowds. Hurry!

How beautiful this building still is today! It could hold 12,000 scrolls, which is a lot by ancient standards. They were stored in cupboards in the walls. Unfortunately, Paul didn't see this library. It wasn't built until 70 years after his lifetime. The building was originally a tomb for Celsus (sel'sus), the governor of Asia. The four statues (from left to right) symbolize wisdom, knowledge, intelligence and bravery – all virtues of Celsus. Take a quick look around before the crowds come.

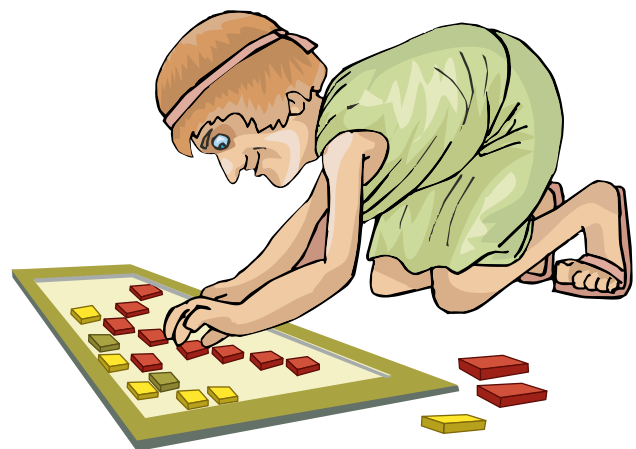


FRESCOES

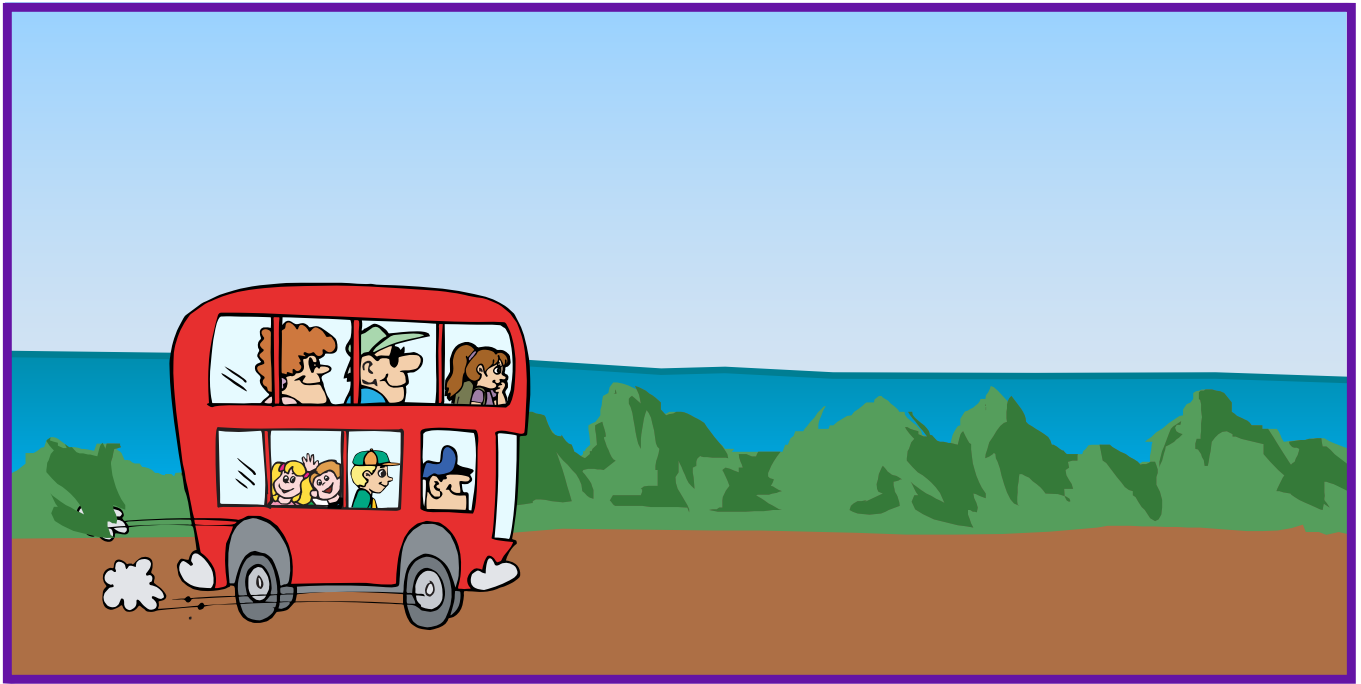


MOSAICS

Now, let's go where most crowds don't go – to the Roman Terrace Houses right next to the library. Three wealthy Roman families lived here 2,000 years ago. They hired the finest artists to build and decorate their houses. Sculptors carved pillars and borders and statues in stone. Mosaic artists created pictures on floors using tiny squares of colored stones. Other artists painted wall pictures called frescoes (fres'kohz). As we climb these modern stairs, we can look inside these beautiful homes. The excavators are still working on this site, uncovering mosaic pieces and putting them back together for visitors like us to see. These Roman Terrace Houses are true works of ancient art.



MAKING A MOSAIC



What a month of adventures we've had! Can you believe we're already two-thirds of the way through our tour? We'll begin our last third right here in Ephesus. But first, let's go to the hotel and take time to look back over all the miles we've covered this month. You should have lots of good memories to write about in your journals!

