

ACTS LESSON 19

Acts Chapter 19

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Memory verses for this week: *Psa 46:2 Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.*

Introduction: In Chapter 18, Paul went to Corinth where he faced great opposition to the gospel by the Jews. He did not give up and continued to teach and preach for a long time, about a year and half. This week, in Chapter 19, we see Paul at Ephesus. The final portion of Acts (23-41) deals with the riot stirred by the idolatrous silversmiths of Diana.

I. Paul at Ephesus

Acts 19:1 And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples,

While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul came to Ephesus. The reference to the “upper coasts” alludes to the highlands. He evidently did not take the Roman road through Colossi and Laodicea, but rather took the more direct route from Galatia and Phrygia when coming upon Ephesus. Ephesus was the chief city of the Roman province of Asia and one of the chief cities of the Roman Empire. In the province of Asia, which Ephesus dominated, were other cities such as Smyrna, Thyatira, Pergamos, Philadelphia, Laodicea, which with Ephesus, were the seven churches of Revelation 2 and 3.

Other cities such as Colossi and Hierapolis made Asia a major province of the Roman Empire. Ephesus was its chief. Here, the power of Rome, the culture of Greece, and the mystique of the orient all merged. The temple of Artemis (Diana) was here and was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. The Holy Ghost had earlier forbid Paul to preach in (the province of) Asia. That prohibition evidently was temporary, time related, and not location related. God had other places for Paul to preach at that time. However, now the time was right to come to Ephesus. Paul had stopped here briefly at the end of his second journey and had promised interested hearers in the synagogue that he would return, Lord willing (18:21). Now he had. Upon arriving, he found “certain disciples.” Verse 7 notes that there were twelve in all.

Acts 19:2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

Acts 19:3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.

Acts 19:4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

In conversing with these 'disciples' at Ephesus, Paul evidently sensed that they were quite incomplete in their knowledge. They, like Apollos before, essentially knew only the ministry of John the Baptist. It might be inferred that they had even been influenced by Apollos in coming to their imperfect knowledge. Apollos had spent some time earlier in Ephesus preaching John's baptism. Paul questioned these Jewish 'disciples' if they had received the Holy Ghost since they believed. The question is not of some sort of second blessing or filling of the Holy Spirit after salvation as advanced by modern Pentecostal or charismatic groups. Paul wanted to know if they had been saved in the first place. The indwelling ministry of the Holy Ghost after salvation is a clear proof of salvation. Their reply was insightful. Though they claimed the name 'disciples,' they did not even know if there was a Holy Ghost. Paul had pretty much received his answer.

Paul asked them a specific question. "Unto what then were ye baptized?" Their reply was John's baptism. Paul then explained that John's baptism was an identification with his message of repentance in preparation of the coming King. It was an expression of belief in the coming of Christ. It encompassed both repentance and faith. The baptism of John was scriptural in every aspect. These imperfect Jewish disciples evidently had repentant hearts, but had not as yet trusted Christ as Savior. They, like Apollos, had never heard the 'rest of the story' of Christ's work, crucifixion, and resurrection. Though not explicitly stated, they evidently trusted Christ.

We saw in Chapter 18 where Apollos had been at Ephesus and did much teaching. At this time, he had gone to Corinth. Paul meets these certain disciples and Paul asks them if they had received the Holy Ghost. During the early days of the church, the Holy Spirit was a very misunderstood topic, and perhaps is still one of the greatest mysteries in churches today. In our day, the Holy Spirit comes and dwells in every believer at the moment we are saved. These men did not understand at all about the Holy Spirit, and said they had known only of John's baptism. Perhaps Apollos had taught them some on what he knew of baptism, but Paul elaborates on the need for baptism in order to be a member of the local church. Surely they must have known that the Holy Ghost was coming.

Mat 3:11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:

Mat 28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

Mat 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

Mat 28:20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

W. A. Criswell in the Believers Study Bible said this about the filling of the Holy Ghost to the believer.

This is an unusual question made necessary by the unique situation which confronted the apostle Paul. It is the Holy Spirit who convicts of sin, convinces of Christ, and comes into the heart of a believer to abide forever. For the believer, receiving the Holy Spirit occurs at the time of conversion. Any believer may also and indeed should experience renewals and fresh in-fillings of the Spirit (cf. Eph. 5:18).

Acts 19:5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Acts 19:6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

Here is a clear scriptural example of a believer being 're-baptized.' Their former 'baptism' was not scriptural in that they had not as of yet trusted Jesus Christ. One must hear the gospel before the new birth takes place. Now upon hearing and being saved, they followed the Lord scripturally in the water of baptism.

The significance of them speaking in tongues had manifold purpose. This is the third and the last recorded instance in the entire Bible of anyone speaking in tongues. They all were Jewish believers. Tongues were a sign-gift to Israel as noted in I Corinthians 14:21-22.

1Co 14:21 In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord.

1W.A. Criswell, *Believer's study Bible [computer file], electronic ed.*, Logos Library System, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1991 by the Criswell Center for Biblical Studies.

1Co 14:22 Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.

Though not stated, it may well be there were other Jews from the local synagogue present who witnessed this sign to unbelieving Israel. As in earlier cases, an outward and perceptible manifestation of the Holy Spirit was granted inasmuch as Paul had queried them whether they had received the Spirit. As at Pentecost and Cornelius' household, such manifestations made it clear that God's hand was upon the message of Christ. These partial Jewish disciples were left with no question of the validity of Paul's message.

It is noteworthy that in each case of speaking in tongues noted in the New Testament, either Jewish participants or Jewish witnesses were present. As noted in I Corinthians 14:21-22, tongues were a sign-gift in warning Israel to turn to Christ, or else.

II. Paul in the Synagogue and in the school of Tyrannus

Acts 19:7 And all the men were about twelve.

Acts 19:8 And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.

Paul began a lengthy and fruitful ministry at Ephesus. He initially spent three months speaking boldly in the local synagogue. Luke records that he disputed and persuaded "the things concerning the kingdom of God." Though the phrase 'kingdom of God,' in its most specific sense, refers to the return of Christ and the full establishment of His kingdom; it on occasion also has a broader, more generic sense referring to the church and God's work in this age in general. Probably both are in view here.

The Jewish mind of the synagogue would most likely be initially interested in the coming kingdom when Christ returns. That, no doubt, provided Paul a springboard to then present the message of salvation by grace through faith in Christ. The idea of disputing holds the sense of open debate. In so doing, he sought to persuade his Jewish audience. Ephesus was a large prosperous city. In as much as only one synagogue is implied, it must have been a large edifice of grand architecture. One can only imagine Paul preaching from the pulpit of that large auditorium.

When these disciples heard Paul concerning Jesus Christ, they were baptized in the name and authority of Christ. As had been the case several times before in

the early days of the church, the Holy Ghost came upon these early Christians when hands were laid upon them. And for the third time, we see these that received the Holy Ghost speak in tongues. The other two times were in Acts 2:4 and Acts 10:46.

Acts 2:4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Acts 10:44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

Acts 10:45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Acts 10:46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,

Acts 10:47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?

Some other places that the Holy Ghost came upon those who were saved but they did not speak in tongues was in Acts 4:8, 4:31, 8:17, and 9:17. We believe that tongues had a specific purpose and time, and were only in existence during the apostolic times based upon 1 Cor. 13:8.

1 Cor 13:8 Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

1 Cor 13:9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.

1 Cor 13:10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

Acts 19:9 But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.

Acts 19:10 And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

Much like Paul's time in Corinth, Jewish hearts were hardened and he had to remove himself elsewhere. The word translated as divers (tiv tis) often is rendered as 'some.' Whether they were a minority or majority is not known. Likely, it was a vocal minority. Nevertheless, hearts became hardened. They believed not. And they began to stir discord within the synagogue concerning Paul's preaching by speaking "evil of that way before the multitude." Though the term "that way" may be generic referring to Christ and the gospel, it also was

used by many in the first century of 'people of the way.' This was evidently in relationship to John 14:6 where Jesus said, "I am the way."

Paul therefore left the synagogue, separated the disciples which believed with him, and continued preaching (disputing) daily in the school of Tyrannus. There is record of a noted physician in Rome by the name of Tyrannus. It is possible that a school, perhaps of medicine, connected with this Tyrannus, was located in Ephesus. Luke, as a physician may have had connections through the medical community of his day and had enabled Paul to so obtain space in a 'college of medicine.' In any event, Paul continued preaching there. He had gone to the Jews first. Now, his message would continue to the gentiles in the halls of academia at Ephesus.

An additional two years were spent preaching in these quarters. One might only imagine the stately forum which was provided for the furtherance of the gospel. No doubt, a substantial university hall became the auditorium for Paul's preaching for the next two years. As a result, "all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks." Once again, the mention of Asia is a reference to the local province of Asia and not the continent of Asia as thought of today. During that time, the entire population of that area came under the influence of the gospel as Paul preached from his metropolitan pulpit in Ephesus.

We learn that Paul taught in the synagogue for about three months. Many were hardened and did not believe. When this happened, Paul began to teach in the school of Tyrannus each day. He taught in this school for two years, and had results. Everyone in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both the Jews and the Greeks.

III. Miracles by Paul

*Acts 19:11 And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul:
Acts 19:12 So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.*

Luke has recorded approximately two years and three months of Paul's ministry at Ephesus. However, in 20:31, Paul indicates that he had labored in Ephesus for the space of three years. No doubt the events to follow make up that difference. Here, Luke records how "God wrought special miracles by the hand of Paul." The phrase "special miracles" transliterates 'not obtainable powers.'

The idea is that they were supernaturally authored by God himself. The word translated as body here (crwv chros) is not the word normally translated as 'body'

(swmasoma). Rather, it has the sense of the skin or the touching of the body. People from the community evidently took handkerchiefs or aprons and came and touched Paul with them. In returning, their sick were healed. Several comments are in order.

(1) In the absence of the completed New Testament, God gave special gifts to leadership of the early church. In part these were to authenticate the truth of their message.

(2) This is noted in I Corinthians 12:9-10 where both healing and miracles are recorded as part of the interim gifts of the Spirit given to the early church.

(3) When the New Testament was completed, these gifts faded away. See I Corinthians 13:8-10.

(4) Though not equating human sickness with demon activity, here they are placed in the same context. Perhaps more infirmities are caused by demonic activity than we understand.

Since Satan had such a control over this city, it was necessary that God allow Paul to perform some special miracles so that the people might believe. It seems that our cities are certainly full of control by Satan this week. As I prepare the original teaching on this lesson, it was September 18, 1999, and I was in Ft. Worth about five miles from the Wedgewood Baptist Church Wednesday before the tragedy where the eight people were killed by the gunman who entered the sanctuary where some young people had gathered to pray and opened fire.

As Governor George Bush said back then, this was a double tragedy in that it happened in a place of love and hope. As we see more and more shootings in schools and churches, we realize the power that Satan has over people in our day. The reports said that the gunman had lost all hope due to his father dying in July. No one can survive without hope, and our hope is not in man, but the Lord Jesus Christ. What this world needs is not more social programs and man made ideals, but they need Jesus Christ. Christ is the hope of all who come unto Him. No matter what we face, Jesus can see us through and we can have hope.

Rom 15:13 Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

Eph 2:12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

Eph 2:13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

In our lesson, Paul had special powers being one of the apostles. This was similar to when Elisha's bones were used to bring life to man who touched them.

2 Ki 13:21 And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of men; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet.

I don't understand the exact meaning of the handkerchiefs and their use, but God used great power in order to meet the power of Satan and to wipe out the demons. It would be great if we could do things like this today, but apostolic powers were but for a season. We can still pray and if God chooses, people can be healed or demons taken away. But it is not done by our powers or in the laying on of hands like it was in those early days.

IV. Paul at Ephesus

Acts 19:13 Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.

Acts 19:14 And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so.

Acts 19:15 And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?

Acts 19:16 And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

The mention of "vagabond Jews, exorcists" is a reference to itinerant 'gypsy' like Jews who had assumed a 'profession' of exorcizing unclean spirits. This was typically through the recitation of oaths or some other 'magical' formula. They hoped to dislodge unclean spirits from those so afflicted. To what degree they were effective is not known. However, in so doing, they made their living, whether by quackery or indeed. In seeing the success of Paul at Ephesus in casting out demons in the name of Jesus Christ, they sought to use Paul's method. They therefore attempted to cast out demons by the name of Jesus.

Notably, a Jew by the name of Sceva, who evidently was of Aaronic stock, did so. An "evil spirit" answered, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?" Whereupon, the man possessed with the demon leaped onto the eight Jewish exorcists, "overcame them, and prevailed against them." They wound up fleeing out of the house "naked and wounded." The word translated as naked (gumnov gumnos) may imply total nakedness or stripped down to

undergarments. The word translated as wounded (traumatizw traumatidzo) literally means they were 'traumatized.'

A lesson may be drawn that dealing with demons is a risky business. Here, one demon working through one possessed man literally beat up and traumatized the eight men trying to exorcize him. The power of Satan is nothing to take lightly.

We see that some of the Jews saw the miracles wrought by Paul, and they decide to cast out evil spirits in the name of Jesus. But these men were imposters, and not saved men who truly knew Jesus Christ. Note even the evil spirit says "Jesus I know, Paul I know, but who are ye?" Believe me, Satan's demons know Jesus Christ, and they know each of us who are saved. But the lost man has no power over evil spirits that have come upon him or her. It says that the man leaped upon them and overcame them. (these sons of Sceva.) It says the word of this got around and fear fell upon all those in Ephesus.

Acts 19:17 And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.

Acts 19:18 And many that believed came, and confessed, and showed their deeds.

Acts 19:19 Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.

Acts 19:20 So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.

Though Sceva failed to cast out demons in the name of Jesus, it became clear that Paul was able by the authority of Jesus Christ to subdue the power of the devil. The result was "many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds." As the power of the gospel took root in Ephesus, new converts openly confessed past sin, evidently with the occult ("curious arts"). The occult was so prevalent in Ephesus that throughout the Roman Empire the term 'Ephesian Letters' was a reference to incantations of black magic. Portions of these were even worn as amulets or charms. These had been compiled in books on magic and the occult which proliferated.

So powerful was the Word of God in Ephesus that "many . . . brought their books together, and burned them before all men." They in turn estimated the value of those books at 50,000 pieces of silver. Precisely to what that would translate in modern money is debatable. However, in any event it was a sizeable sum. Indeed, "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17).

The reason that we don't see many come to know Christ as Savior today is that men do not have the fear of God in them as they used to have. Until a man or woman understands their lost condition, are convicted of their sins and see themselves as hopeless and without any remedy outside of Christ, they will never be saved. But the lost sinner who is humble, repents of those sins and turns to Christ in faith, that person will be saved and justified. Because great fear came upon Ephesus, it says that many believed and came confessed their sins and were saved. And in an act that proved their salvation, they brought their evil arts and books and burned them before the city. It says that the cost of these books were 50,000 pieces of silver. But when a person is saved, we don't have a desire to be in the places of the world or take part in things that are against God. And the results were that they grew in the word of God and prevailed. Nothing helps us like reading God's word, and we need to do it everyday.

V. The Uproar of the Silversmiths

Acts 19:21 After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome.

Acts 19:22 So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season.

Thereafter, Luke records how Paul planned to eventually go to Jerusalem after he returned to Macedonia and Achaia (Greece). And after that, he ultimately desired to see Rome. Acts 20:16 indicates that he wished to arrive in Jerusalem by Pentecost, which typically was early summer. Therefore, it might be inferred that it was early spring at this time. For the first time on his third missionary journey, associates are mentioned. (Two others will be noted in verse 29.)

No record is made if they had been with Paul from the outset or had joined him at some point after he had departed from Antioch. In any event, Paul sent Timothy and Erastus. Not much is known about Erastus though he is mentioned in II Timothy 4:20 and evidently was from Corinth (Romans 16:23). These were sent ahead by Paul into Macedonia for his anticipated journey, though he tarried a while in the province of Asia. The reason for his delay may be found in I Corinthians 16:8-9. A great door of opportunity remained open in Ephesus.

Acts 19:23 And the same time there arose no small stir about that way.

Acts 19:24 For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen;

Acts 19:25 Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth.

Acts 19:26 Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people,

*saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands:
Acts 19:27 So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth.
Acts 19:28 And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.*

Meanwhile, riotous events were beginning in Ephesus. The mention of “that way” once again is one of the terms applied to early Christians. They preached that Jesus was ‘the way.’ Located at Ephesus was a major temple to Diana (literally Artemis), a pagan goddess of fertility. Legend had it that an image of her had fallen from heaven. The Ephesians had therefore made a temple for this idolatrous image.

A thriving industry existed in Ephesus in making replicas of this image and shrines associated thereto. Many, though not all, of these were produced by silversmiths who had become quite wealthy as a result. As Paul had preached in Ephesus going on three years, they began to notice a drop in business as people turned from idolatry to Christ. These craftsmen were became alarmed by this loss of business. A leader among them named Demetrius stirred his fellow tradesmen and incited them to action against Paul.

We see that when many were saved, Paul purposed in his spirit to go to Rome. He sent into Macedonia to find Timothy and Erastus. About this time, the silversmith Demetrius caused a great uproar due to the great loss of business he was having. When people get saved, they won’t waste their money on false silver idols like their goddess Diana. And a silversmith makes much money when people buy his wares, so he turned on Paul and those that believe in the name of Christ. Some of the things the silversmith claims are:

He says by this craft (making shrines to Diana) that they had gained their wealth.

He declares that Paul had turned many people away, not only in Ephesus but in all of Asia.

He declares that Paul had said that there were no gods made by hands. (Which of course was true)

He says that this was about to ruin his business.

By bringing in a little religion, Paul was causing the great goddess Diana to be despised.

Acts 19:29 And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre.

Acts 19:30 And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not.

Acts 19:31 And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring him that he would not adventure himself into the theatre.

Acts 19:32 Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together.

In fashion reminiscent of Philippi, these incited a riot in the city. They could not locate Paul, so they “caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul’s companions in travel.” Two additional brethren from Macedonia are noted as companions with Paul. Again, when or where they joined with him, we have not been told. These were forced by the mob into the amphitheater of the city. Great Greek cities customarily built large amphitheaters for not only entertainment productions, but also for political or municipal gatherings.

Paul, in hearing that his companions were taken by the mob, desired to go and stand with them. Many of the disciples and even influential citizens of the region urged him not to go. They feared the worst which well could have happened. Meanwhile, the mob in the amphitheater was confused in their frenzy, and most did not even know what was going on.

Acts 19:33 And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defence unto the people.

Acts 19:34 But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.

Evidently, some Jews were also caught up by the mob and were thrust into the arena as accused. These Jews therefore set forth a fellow by the name of Alexander (possibly the same Alexander mentioned later by Paul to Timothy in II Timothy 4:14).

2Ti 4:14 Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works:

As he attempted to mount some sort of defense, the crowd quickly picked up on that he was Jewish. Latent anti-Semitism is implied, for Jews were just as adamant against idolatry as Paul had been. It may also be that the pagan idolaters made no distinction between the Jews and Paul who also was a Jew.

In perceiving that Alexander was a Jew, the crowd began to chant, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," which went on for two hours.

After hearing Demetrius, the various silversmiths cause a great uproar throughout the city. Some of Paul's companions were taken into the theatre. Paul determined to go in to their aid, but the disciples would not let him for his own protection. Note how this was such a typical mob type situation. Many don't even know why they are gathered, and when Alexander tries to speak in their defence, they all ran about crying "Great is Diana of the Ephesians."

Matthew Henry said some good things about the situation with the people being upset due to the silversmiths.

The popular resentment of this complaint. The charge was managed by a craftsman, and was framed to incense the common people, and it had the desired effect; for on this occasion they showed, (1.) A great displeasure against the gospel and the preachers of it. *They were full of wrath* (v. 28), *full of fury and indignation*, so the word signifies. The craftsmen went stark mad when they were told that their trade and their idol were both in danger. (2.) A great jealousy for the honour of their goddess: *They cried out, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians; and we are resolved to stand by her, and live and die in the defence of her. Are there any that expose her to contempt, or threaten her destruction?*

Let us alone to deal with them. Let Paul say ever so much to prove that those are no gods which are made with hands, we will abide by it that, whatever becomes of other gods and goddesses, *Great is Diana of the Ephesians*. We must and will stand up for the religion of our country, which we have received by tradition from our fathers." Thus all people *walked every one in the name of his god*, and all thought well of their own; much more should the servants of the true God do so, who can say, *This God is our God for ever and ever*. (3.) A great disorder among themselves (v. 29): *The whole city was full of confusion*—the common and natural effect of intemperate zeal for a false religion; it throws all into confusion, dethrones reason, and enthrones passion; and men run together, not only not knowing one another's minds, but not knowing their own. 2

Acts 19:35 And when the townclerk had appeased the people, he said, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter?

Acts 19:36 Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly.

2Henry, Matthew, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Bible*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers) 1997.

Acts 19:37 For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess.

Such an assembly was not scheduled nor sanctioned by the Romans. The Roman government, from much experience, was very sensitive to such outbursts of public mob action. They knew all too well how such uncontrolled meetings could spawn insurrection. Therefore, such unsanctioned meetings were not permitted. The town clerk might be the equivalent of a modern mayor. He was the highest elected municipal official permitted by the Romans.

It was he who was the direct liaison with the Roman proconsul and it was he who would be called onto the carpet about what this raucous meeting was all about. He therefore sought to defuse the meeting. He noted that as far as he was concerned, everyone knew how great Diana was. He urged them to be quiet, noting further that the men thrust into the arena had evidently done nothing wrong.

The mention of robbers of churches (‘ierosulov hiersulos) literally means ‘sacrilege.’ Though the Christians present certainly did not believe in Diana, the townclerk said there was no evidence they had blasphemed her or in any way desecrated her temple.

Acts 19:38 Wherefore if Demetrius, and the craftsmen which are with him, have a matter against any man, the law is open, and there are deputies: let them implead one another.

Acts 19:39 But if ye inquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly.

The town clerk enjoined Demetrius and his craftsmen to take them to civil court if they had a complaint against them. He then declared that anything else would be dealt with in a lawful scheduled assembly. The word translated as assembly (ekklhsia ekklessia) is the same word normally translated as ‘church.’ Its original use was for the officially called-out assembly of voting citizens in Greek city states for municipal business.

Such cities were pure democracies in distinction to a representative form of government. The assembly referred to by the townclerk was the next regular officially called-out assembly of the city as permitted by Roman law. This same word is the term chosen by the Holy Spirit to refer to the local church of the New Testament.

Acts 19:40 For we are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse.

Acts 19:41 And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.

The town clerk further reminded his boisterous constituents that the entire city and its privileges under Roman law were in danger of being “called into question” for the uproar that day. There was no legitimate reason he could provide to the Roman authorities. Therefore, he dismissed the assembly.

We see here the speech of the town clerk. He quietly showed them that their proceedings were undignified, unlawful, and dangerous. In verse 35, he declares that everybody knows that the city of the Ephesians was a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter. He rightly points out that the disciples had not robbed the temple. However, if Paul had been present, I believe with all my heart that he would have spoken against this false god, Diana. The town clerk points out that they had unlawfully arrested these men, and that if Demetrius had a grievance against Paul under Roman jurisdiction, he should bring it before the proconsul.

He further states that if the grievance touched matters over which the Greeks had jurisdiction, he should bring the case before the regular session of that court. He points out in verse 40 that they were in danger of being called before the Romans to answer for this disturbance. Calmer minds prevailed, and he dismissed the assembly. When we do things decently and in order, God is glorified. We should never ourselves take part in any “mob type” behavior. The bible says to be angry and sin not.

Eph 4:26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

Eph 4:27 Neither give place to the devil.

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Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

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