

This morning we're going to finish chapter 19 of the Book of Acts. Once again we are going to witness Satan's attempts to stop the Gospel from spreading out into the known world.

### *But First! The Context!!!!*

*Acts 19:14-20* Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so. (15) And the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?" (16) Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. (17) This became known both to all Jews and Greeks dwelling in Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, **and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.** (18) And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. (19) Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totaled fifty thousand pieces of silver. (20) **So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.**

(Acts 19:21) When these things were accomplished, 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**."

"when he had passed..." – this isn't something that happened already... more like "after he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia after leaving Ephesus..."

He went thru Corinth and other towns to take up an offering for the church in Jerusalem:

We learn in Acts 24:17 "Now after many years I came to bring alms and offerings to my nation (( **that is, in Jerusalem** ))

Romans 15:25-27 But now I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints. (26) For it pleased those from Macedonia and **Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem.** (27) It pleased them **indeed**, and they are their debtors. For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their **duty** is also to minister to them in material things.

(Acts 19:22) So he sent **into** Macedonia two of those who ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus, but he himself stayed in Asia for a time.

1 Corinthians 4:16-17 Therefore I urge you, imitate me. (17) For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.

(Acts 19:23) And about that time there arose a great commotion about the Way.

The number of believers in Ephesus grew so that it was having an affect on the local businesses who manufactured and sold statues and shrines of the goddess Diana. **Diana is the Roman name of Artemis**, the Greek **goddess** of chastity, virginity, the hunt, the moon, and the natural environment. She was the daughter of Zeus and Leto, twin sister of Apollo.

(Acts 19:24) For a certain man named **Demetrius**, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Diana, brought no small profit to the craftsmen. (Acts 19:25) He called them together with the workers of similar occupation, and said: "Men, you know that we have our prosperity by this trade. (Acts 19:26) Moreover you see and hear that not only at Ephesus, but throughout almost all Asia, **this Paul has persuaded and turned away many people, saying that they are not gods which are made with hands. (Acts 19:27) So not only is this trade of ours in danger of falling into disrepute, but also the temple of the great goddess Diana may be despised and her magnificence destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worship. (Acts 19:28) Now when they heard this, they were full of wrath and cried out, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"**

Demetrius didn't care one whit about Diana. He cared only for his livelihood. But, that didn't stop him from lying about the things Paul taught!

*"Fellow craftsmen, **Paul has taught** the people that there are no "gods" that are made by human hands. This would lead our **customers...I mean the locals**, to despise the great "goddess" Diana! And then her temple would end up being destroyed by neglect." We cannot allow him to dishonor her in such a way...((and it's not helping our profits much either!))*

No one would ever bother to investigate whether these things were true or not. AND that, my friends, is exactly goes on today! I think the last election and the last year and a half have proven without a shadow of doubt that the "bigger the lie" the more it is believed and once believed, it is nearly impossible to reverse its affects.

(Acts 19:29) So the whole city was filled with confusion, and **rushed into the theater** with one accord, having seized **Gaius and Aristarchus**, Macedonians, Paul's travel companions.

Not finding Paul, they grabbed a couple of his companions and took them into the theater; This was very different than our Cumberland County Playhouse!

First of all, this particular theater supposedly could hold up to 25,000 people!

**John Gill** describes it as the place where the public plays were acted in honor of the goddess Diana, and where, among other things, men were set to fight with wild beasts; and very likely the intention of the mob, in hurrying Paul's companions thither, was to throw them to the wild beasts. A theatre is a spectacle or show, so called, because in them fights were shown, plays were acted, games exercised, and battles fought between men and men, and between men and beasts, and between beasts and beasts;

(Acts 19:30) And when Paul wanted to go in to the people, the disciples would not allow him. (Acts 19:31) Then some of the officials of Asia, who were his friends, sent to him pleading that he would not venture into the theater.

Given the purposes of the theater, Paul was kept from venturing into the building. Whether he understood the probable consequences or not, the disciples and friends begged him not to go. If he did go, it was not recorded by Luke...

Some believe Paul was put into a theater like this because of on verse in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:32:

**1 Corinthians 15:32** If, in the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage *is it* to me? If *the* dead do not rise, "LET US EAT AND DRINK, FOR TOMORROW WE DIE!"

And while Luke did not record every event in the life of Paul, others believe this to be more figurative language describing the opposition he faced in Ephesus!

**(Acts 19:32)** Some therefore cried one thing and some another, **for the assembly was confused, and most of them did not know why they had come together.**

The crowd is growing into a mob. A mob becomes something more and very different than the sum of the folks involved. It takes on a life of its own!

Wiersbe quotes Benjamin Franklin who said **"a mob's a monster; heads enough, but no brains."**

We saw this very clearly in the Gospels:

**Mark 15:9-15** But Pilate answered them, saying, "Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?" **(10)** For he knew that the chief priests had handed Him over because of envy. **(11)** But the chief priests stirred up the crowd, so that he should rather release Barabbas to them. **(12)** Pilate answered and said to them again, "What then do you want me to do *with Him* whom you call the King of the Jews?" **(13)** So they cried out again, "Crucify Him!" **(14)** Then Pilate said to them, "Why, what evil has He done?" But they cried out all the more, "Crucify Him!" **(15)** So Pilate, wanting to gratify the crowd, released Barabbas to them; and he delivered Jesus, after he had scourged *Him*, to be crucified.

**(Acts 19:33)** And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander motioned with his hand, and wanted to make his defense to the people.

This was a non-believing Jew. We can probably assume that he wanted to distance himself from the accusations of the mob against the Christians.

**(Acts 19:34)** But when they found out that he was a Jew, all with one voice cried out for **about two hours**, "Great *is* Diana of the Ephesians!"

The crowd is at the peak of frenzy!

**(Acts 19:35)** And when **the city clerk** had quieted the crowd, he said: "Men of Ephesus, what man is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is **temple guardian of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Zeus?**

"city clerk" is understating this man's position. Gill explains

"a chief man of the city"; the Septuagint interpreters in [Exo 5:6](#) use the word for the Egyptian officers that were over the Israelites; and the Babylonians used to call the priest of Isis by this

name; and according to some learned men, this man's office was to register the conquerors' names, and their rewards in the theatre; and who was chosen into this office by the people, and was a man of some considerable authority, as it is very apparent by what follows that this man was:

(Acts 19:36) Therefore, since these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rashly.

(Acts 19:37) For you have brought these men here who are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of your goddess.

Not only was this man a person of authority, he was a rational man who seemed to understand what was actually taught by Paul and the disciples!

(Acts 19:38) Therefore, if Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a case against anyone, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. Let them bring charges against one another. (Acts 19:39) But if you have any other inquiry to make, it shall be determined in the lawful assembly.

(Acts 19:40) For we are in danger of being called in question for today's uproar, there being no reason which we may give to account for this disorderly gathering."

Part of the city clerks motivation for calming things down was to ensure that there would not be any negative consequences by Rome officials, proconsuls or even the Emperor! Rome did not take kindly to any local upheavals and would send the Imperial Storm Troopers into town to squash the rebellious mobs. The Dark Side of the Force was powerful and merciless!

(Acts 19:41) And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly.

Whew! The crowds dispersed, and the beasts were left hungry (and if truth be told, they were quite "hangry").

"For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: but we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raises the dead: who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us; ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf" (2 Cor 1:8-11).

What do we take away from this?

About 4000 years ago, a promise was made to Abraham that in his seed, all of the nations would be blessed. That promise was made because of his obedience and etched-in-stone faith he had in his God. A nation was created by God to carry this seed throughout the next 2000 years. The seed had to be preserved through slavery, wars, faithlessness, disobedience, rebelliousness, sin and much punishment. But God...

And two-thousand years ago, the seed came. Nothing that man or satan could do could stop the Plan of God from coming to fruition. The Son of God came. Listen to the Holy Spirit Glorify the Son through the least likely of all the Apostles:

**Colossians 1:15-22** He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. (16) For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. (17) And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. (18) And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. (19) For it pleased *the Father that* in Him all the fullness should dwell, (20) and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. (21) And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled (22) in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight—

True LIFE came to earth. The Light of His Glory shined on a narrow road to show us the WAY to receive the TRUTH and therefore to be received by God because of the cleansing of all sin through His Blood!

All of this has been testified by the Holy Spirit through the Holy Scriptures, both Old and New!

### **FAST-FORWARD ANOTHER 2000 YEARS:**

Now, Demetrius is dead and his so-called defense of Diana and her temple is also forgotten except in a few verses of Biblical history. Diana is not worshipped and except for, perhaps, some modern pagans, none of the Greek or Roman or Egyptian, or Babylonian “gods” are worshipped. I’d say that they are all dead but since they were never alive except in the deluded and vivid imaginations of the deceived... it wouldn’t be quite accurate. But their temples and shrines are destroyed; the arenas are just a fragment of their former glory; The city of Ephesus is all but gone along with many/most of the cities we read about in our Bible. They are of interest of archeologists, history buffs and religious tour groups. The temple of Diana was considered one of the seven wonders of the world.

Dust and rubble. Any beauty they had is gone...and left to our imaginations.

**Isaiah 40:8** The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever."

The Word of God is still here! The church is still here! Israel is still here! The apostles are spoken of in honor and are remembered for their faithfulness to the Gospel of Christ....but all those who came against them are just dust in the wind.

The Word of God reveals the Glory of God! The Body of Christ lives for His Glory; As Daniel Henderson quoted in his book that most of us are studying:

**Psalms 40:16** Let all those who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; Let such as love Your salvation say continually, "**The LORD be magnified!**"