

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

A RIOT (ACTS 19:21-27) AFTER THESE EVENTS...

After the people of Ephesus burned enormous amounts of occult literature in the streets, "Paul resolved by the Spirit to pass through Macedonia and Achaia."

- He wanted to go back to Jerusalem, but backwards in order to revisit the churches in Greece. He also wanted to head towards Rome.

ROME WOULD DRIVE THE REST OF THE BOOK

Paul wanted to travel back to previous church plants to encourage them and bring them financial resources from other churches, but from chapter 19 on, Rome is the target of Luke's narrative.

- Rome was the capital of the world; the center point of all human influence and culture on planet earth.

SENDING TWO ASSISTANTS AHEAD OF HIM

As Paul hangs out in Asia Minor a little longer, he sends two of his protégés, Timothy and Erastus, to North Greece.

- Erastus is also mentioned in 2 Timothy 4, but we don't know much about him. Timothy became the main leader at the church of Ephesus and was Paul's closest teammate.

A MAJOR DISTURBANCE ABOUT "THE WAY"

Things had been going really well in Ephesus. Many people had become devoted Christians and the church was making a huge impact in the city. But, a merchant that made silver shrines of Artemis (Diana) intended to start a riot against the Christians.

THE PROBLEM WAS AN ECONOMIC ONE

People from all over the world would visit the famous Temple of Artemis. When they would, merchants would sell novelty items to the tourists and make substantial money.

- Demetrius the silversmith wasn't upset that Christianity was contradicting his religion, but that it was affecting his bank account.

MONEY TO HIM, BUT WHAT IS IT TO US?

Demetrius' way of life was being changed by the impact of Jesus on his community. In order to preserve his livelihood, he attacked Christians and the faith.

- **All of us push back on the teachings of Christ because they infringe on our selfish desires. This is a result of not believing His way is better.**

A GOD COME TO RUIN?

Demetrius proclaimed that not only the local "god craftsmen" would suffer, but that the Temple of Artemis "may be despised...and [Artemis] come to the verge of ruin."

- This begs the question, **"Why would one worship something that human hands could destroy?" But, don't we do this all the time?**

GODS (ACTS 19:28-34)

NATIONALISM SELLS BETTER THAN SELFISHNESS

Demetrius began on an economic note but then stirred the crowd on a religious and patriotic level.

Demetrius played to the crowd's fear of losing religious and national identity.

- There's nothing wrong with success, loving our nation, or pride of religious heritage, but when these convolute the gospel, we must reevaluate priorities.

TAKING THE BRUNT OF THE HATRED

Gaius and Aristarchus became the victims of the rioting in the absence of Paul. The massive crowd rushed into the open-air amphitheater (that could hold 25,000 people) dragging the two men with them.

- Paul wanted to face the crowd, but was warned not to by "disciples" and some of the city officials.

A TYPICAL MOB

Luke records that, "Some people were shouting one thing and some another...most of them didn't know why they came together." Like most riots and mobs, the majority of the crowd didn't even understand why the confusion and anger even began.

- **Passion combined with ignorance can be extremely dangerous.**

THROWING ALEX UNDER THE BUS

More than likely the local Jewish community wanted to make it clear they were innocent. So, they pushed Alexander to the front to remind the mob that the Jews had never complained about the Artemis temple before.

- Obviously this didn't work because the mob chanted in unison for hours after they found out he was a Jew.

PATRONAGE (ACTS 19:35-41)

AN UNLIKELY HERO

The city clerk of Ephesus was the equivalent to a mayor. This anonymous person recognized that the riot was out of control and could actually cause Ephesus to lose their self-governing privileges from Rome.

- All provinces of Rome had to maintain the Pax Romana, or "peace of Rome."

"...THE IMAGE THAT FELL FROM HEAVEN?"

The city clerk refers to Ephesus being the "temple guardian of Artemis and of the image that fell from heaven."

- This is most commonly understood to be a meteorite since other stones had become centers of worship throughout the Roman Empire (33 in all).

HOW TO HANDLE THE OFFENSE?

Though many people had turned to Jesus, it is a stretch to say that the entire economy and belief system of Ephesus had changed because of the Christians. Nonetheless, the mob wanted retribution for their "loss."

- Much like our culture today, the Ephesians wanted to sue the ones that offended them.

DEFENDING, BUT NOT JOINING

The city clerk called the people of Ephesus to calm down because the Christians had not done anything blasphemous to their gods or destructive to their economy.

- Though he handled this situation well and defended the Christians this does not mean that he converted or defended their beliefs.

AN UNUSUAL EVENT TO FOCUS ON

The 2nd half of chapter 19 is an odd event to focus on because it doesn't focus on the gospel being spread or even the main characters of Acts. It does show the delicate balance and conflict of civil and spiritual life.

- The Christians could have taken the kindness of the city clerk to an unhealthy level.

CAREFUL WITH PATRONAGE WITH THE WORLD

Though we're to build bridges in business, government, and friendships with nonbelievers and "make every effort to live in peace with everyone" (Hebrews 12:14), we must be careful to not blend in too much with culture.

"The Church persecuted has always been the Church pure, and therefore the Church powerful. The Church patronized has always been the church in peril, and often the Church paralyzed."

- G. Campbell Morgan

TOTAL ACCEPTANCE IS A BAD THING

- Though we work to build bridges, love others well, and show them the light of Christ, **patronage with the culture of the world is detrimental to our faith.**
- Jesus said, "If you were of the world, it would love you as its own. However, because **you're not of the world**, but I have chosen you out of it, it hates you." (John 15:19)

IN IT, BUT NOT OF IT

- The Bible calls us to be peaceful, temporary residents of this world. This means **we function in this culture, but we are not shaped or led** by it (Romans 12).
- We don't use the tactics of the world or live by the philosophies of the world. **We adhere to a higher set of standards and way of life.**

LOVING WITHOUT CONDONING

- Unfortunately, this has created arrogance and isolation from many Christians. **This is wrong and not the example Jesus set for us.**
- With biblical knowledge, prayer, and the leading of the Spirit, **we can effectively love and honor people without compromising our beliefs and convictions.**