

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

AUGUST 9TH, 2026 // BOOK OF ACTS

STAYING IN EPHEBUS (ACTS 19:21–27)

"HE HIMSELF STAYED IN ASIA FOR A WHILE"

Guided by the Holy Spirit, Paul planned to **travel through Macedonia and Achaia on the way to Jerusalem**. Paul also communicated his desire to visit **the church in Rome** (Romans 1:8–15).

- Paul sent Timothy and Erastus ahead of him to Macedonia, yet he was **prevented from going** to collect a "love offering" for the needy followers in Jerusalem (Romans 15:25–33).

UNDERSTANDING THE RELIGIOUS CULTURE

The cult religion with the Temple of Diana (Artemis) at its center was one of the largest religions of that time worldwide. There were 33 shrines spread about the ancient world.

- **A large economy was set up around the worship of Diana**, with people building shrines at their homes so they could bow and pray at them.

"THE VERY ONE ALL OF ASIA AND THE WORLD WORSHIP"

The Temple of Diana truly was famous around the world, with many **making a living from those who would travel to Ephesus** to see one of the seven wonders of the world.

- It would have been a substantial trade for those who **crafted and sold trinkets and souvenirs to visitors** of the Temple of Diana from all over the world.

"THERE WAS A MAJOR DISTURBANCE ABOUT THE WAY"

Conflict arose as Paul continued preaching that God is not in things constructed by the hands of man from wood, stone, silver, or gold.

- The silversmith Demetrius became upset with Paul, so **he gathered his fellow craftsmen**. Demetrius was very cunning in how he spoke to others, **appealing to their finances and pride**.

SHIFTING OUR FOCUS

Paul's focus was not on the Temple of Diana, and his goal was not even to shut it down. His focus was on doing the Lord's work, and **as people came to Jesus, they stopped worshipping Diana** and buying shrines.

- Our **focus should not be on the symptoms of a fallen nature but on sharing the gospel** that transforms hearts.

A RIOT BUILDS IN EPHEBUS (ACTS 19:28–34)

PAUL WANTED TO GO SPEAK TO THE CROWDS

Luke tells us that the whole city was thrown into a frenzy. The angry mob grew as they chanted in repetition, **"Great is Artemis of the Ephesians."** Together, they stormed the amphitheater, dragging along Gaius and Aristarchus, who were traveling with Paul.

- Paul was kept from entering but could hear the deafening chant from outside.

THE EPHESIAN AMPHITHEATER

The ancient city of Ephesus had been restored and reconstructed during the time of Paul; however, the amphitheater was one landmark that did not require restoration.

- Carved out of a mountain on the edge of the city, this great amphitheater could hold 25,000 people. We have this information because it still stands today.

"THE ASSEMBLY WAS IN CONFUSION"

The mob was in a frenzy, yelling and screaming for the blood of Paul's companions. What's the most frightening about this scene is that much of the assembly had **no idea why they were there or what they were mad** about, but they were just going along with the crowd.

- Pack mentality causes individuals to act in a way they would never act alone.

A FAILED ATTEMPT AT SELF PRESERVATION

Alexander came forward, hoping to explain to the mob that the Jews in Ephesus did not approve of Paul or the message he was preaching.

- However, because of their racial prejudice, his presence only enraged the crowd even more, as they shouted, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" for two more hours.

ADDRESSING THE HEART

We may not worship goddesses like Diana, but we all have the propensity to shout, "Great is [whichever idol we have created]!"

- **"The heart of every human being is an idol factory"** (John Calvin). "We are by nature inventors, **craftsmen who create for ourselves idols as substitutes for the living God**" (R.C. Sproul).

CALMING THE CROWDS IN EPHEBUS (ACTS 19:35–41)

TRYING TO KEEP THE PEACE

When the clerk calmed the crowd, he stood forward, essentially claiming Artemis was too famous for a couple of preachers and a few sermons to affect.

- Telling the crowd to allow Demetrius and the silversmiths to take their complaint before a legal assembly seems similar to Pilate washing his hands to keep the peace in Matthew 27:24.

"KEEP CALM AND [DO] NOT DO ANYTHING RASH"

The city clerk's motivation for keeping the peace was primarily for political reasons.

- Ephesus was allowed to exist as a "free city," not under Roman watch. They were allowed to elect their own assemblies, but their "freedom" was always under threat of being revoked by the Romans.

"THESE THINGS ARE UNDENIABLE"

In saying, **"who doesn't know that the city of the Ephesians is the temple guardian of the great Artemis,"** the city clerk was able to manipulate the crowds in the same fashion as Demetrius with the silversmiths.

- He used flattery to quiet them, reassuring them of the greatness of their beloved city and their beloved goddess.

"THE IMAGE THAT FELL FROM HEAVEN"

In the ancient world, **when a meteorite fell to earth, people viewed it as a sign from Heaven**, either seeing the form of a deity or constructing some resemblance to the deity in the meteorite.

- **The temple of Diana enshrined a black meteorite that fell in Ephesus** that either resembled the goddess Diana or was fashioned in her likeness.

WE GET IT BACKWARDS SOMETIMES

The clerk said Paul's companions were not "temple robbers or blasphemers of our goddess." Paul and his companions were promoting a **pro-Jesus attitude more than an anti-everything else attitude**.

- **We tend to spend more time letting everybody know what we are against than promoting what we are for.**

ARE WE SEEING A CHANGE?

- In every person lies the desire to repress knowledge of God and exchange it for a lie by substituting God with created idols (Romans 1:18–23).
- Christianity should affect society.
- Do we look to changing laws to create a change in society, instead of a changing hearts through spreading the gospel?

EXPOSING LIES

- Just as light illuminates the darkness, the truth exposes what is false. When the gospel is preached clearly, accurately, and boldly, it exposes false religion.
- Let's be honest. It is much easier to believe a lie and follow the crowd.
- We are not inherently good, and our hearts are deeply flawed (Jeremiah 17:9).

WHAT NOW?

- We must allow God to give us new hearts (Ezekiel 36:36), guard them (Proverbs 4:23), and pray for Him to create clean hearts and renew right spirits within us (Psalms 51:10).
- We share God's truth without flattery or manipulation.
- We seek the glory of God and not the praise of men.