

Church – The Beginnings, Part 62
Ephesus – Missions Planning and Idolatrous Opposition - Acts 19:21-41
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NEW LIFE FELLOWSHIP

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Acts 19:21-41

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." 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.

²³ And about that time there arose a great commotion about the Way. ²⁴ For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Diana, brought no small profit to the craftsmen. ²⁵ He called them together with the workers of similar occupation, and said: "Men, you know that we have our prosperity by this trade. 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. 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."

²⁸ Now when they heard this, they were full of wrath and cried out, saying, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" 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. ³⁰ And when Paul wanted to go in to the people, the disciples would not allow him. ³¹ Then some of the officials of Asia, who were his friends, sent to him pleading that he would not venture into the theater. 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. 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. 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!"

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? ³⁶ Therefore, since these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rashly. ³⁷ For you have brought these men here who are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of your goddess. 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. ³⁹ But if you have any other inquiry to make, it shall be determined in the lawful assembly. 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." ⁴¹ And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly.

1. Review → Ephesus Missions/Gospel Ministry

- Paul planted the church back in Acts 18
- Paul left Aquila and Priscilla in charge while he went on other Missionary Trips
- Apollos got saved
- 12 Disciples of John the Baptist got saved
- For 3 more months the Synagogue of Ephesus was wide open for the Gospel until ...
- Paul and the Disciples of Jesus Christ (i.e. The Church of Ephesus) moved to the school of Tyrannus for the next 2 years
- Paul, Miracles, Demons, and Book Burning - Acts 19:11-20 → <https://wp1.NLFJI.org/328>

2. Acts 19:21-22 → Missions Planning → Team Building and Church Encouragement ...

Paul wanted to work himself back to Jerusalem, along with his expanding team, that included those from Macedonia, Achaia, Asia (Ephesus), etc. So, Paul sent ahead of him, an **advance team** composed of Timothy and Erastus, but Paul stayed there in Ephesus. Since, the church in Ephesus was well established in Sound Doctrine, the next phase of Ministry is **Missions and Partnership**. Networking of churches and having their connection with Jerusalem.

3. **Acts 19:23-27** – Demetrius and Artemis (Diana) – The Financial Motivation for Persecution. Diana / Artemis → Goddess – from Zeus (daughter of Zeus) – Meteorite that fell from the sky

Wonder Woman? Diana Prince – not quite ...

Mythology: Artemis was the daughter of Zeus and Leto, the Titan goddess of the unseen. Just minutes after her birth, Artemis had to help her mother as she gave birth to her **twin brother, Apollo**. Being associated with chastity, Artemis at an early age asked her father Zeus to grant her eternal virginity (does this sound familiar?) Artemis is most similar to **Athena** (of Athens' fame). Athena is always associated with Apollo. The King of Demons that comes up out of the bottomless pit in Revelation 9:11 – is named (in Hebrew): Abaddon, and in Greek he is named **Apollyon**. Interesting, eh?

Apollo keeps his name in both Greek and Roman Latin – same pronunciation and spelling. Her Symbols include the **Crescent Moon** with a **Star** over it. Seen on all Islamic Mosques today.

Diana (Latin) / Artemis (Greek) → In other ancient cultures she is also known as → Isis, **Cybele**, Ashtoreth, Asherah, Astarte, Oestre, Easter, Ishtar, Semiramis (wife of Nimrod), Aphrodite, Venus, Athena, **Allat** (the female version of Allah – the Black Stone – Ka'aba)

Islam's Connection: <https://mysteryoftheiniquity.com/2011/04/04/the-black-stone-at-mecca/>

She is known as the **Queen of Heaven**, mother of **Tammuz** (or Mithras, Mamuzi)

She is the wife of Ba'al (or Bel).

- Osiris, Isis, Horus [Egypt] -- Ba'al, **Ashtoreth**, Tammuz [Middle East/Asia]

It all goes back to Babylon's Mystery Religion started by Nimrod.

(see Jeremiah 7:18, 44:18-25, Ezekiel 8:14)

She is the corruption of the Name or Title: **El Shaddai** (אֱלֹהֵי שָׁדַי) – God Almighty.

→ God All Nurturing, All Providing, Like a Parent does to his/her children.

Shad - in Hebrew has the base meaning of Breast – Breastfeeding – Mother Nursing her young

Shadad – had a meaning of destroyer.

→ Mother Bear protecting her young – is the best word picture that Shaddai gives.

Artemis / Diana (the statue of her with many breasts) is a corruption of this aspect of the nature of God.

Financial Motivation: The Gospel is cutting into their Business (craftmanship) of making Idols / statues of and little shrines for the goddess Artemis.

Mostly, the Motivation behind most of the Persecution of the Missionary Work of the Apostles, especially, of Paul the Apostle, was motivated by Religious Jealousy. Jews who heard the Gospel and then rejected it (loving the Old Wine and Old Wineskins of the Old Mosaic Covenant – they rejected the New Covenant of the Messiah). They were hardened and wanted to **destroy The WAY**. They used riots, intimidation, threats of violence, and violence to drive out the church and/or Paul. They were never successful in destroying the church in the places that they were planted.

We have only one other instance of Financial Motivation: **Philippi** → **Acts 16:16-24** → Paul casted the demon (the spirit of Python) out of the young girl who was using **divination** (this was like the Oracle of Delphi) – cast out in the Name of Jesus. Her owners were not pleased and started a riot and the magistrates through Paul and Silas into prison because of the after-effect of the Gospel's Power.

In all cases of Persecution – it happened **AFTER** the Gospel was preached and folks started to come to Christ, disciples were made, etc. So, if you want to avoid persecution, hide out in your homes, be very quiet in your workplace, and never let anyone know about Jesus Christ, the Gospel, and the Word of God. Be very quiet, don't associate with people, and the devil will

leave you alone - and then re-read Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15.

In the case of Ephesus – the Guild of Silversmiths, listened to Demetrius, and conspired to cause a riot about what Paul had done. The Gospel was causing people to turn from the false gods and goddesses of mythology and turn to the Living and True God (see 1 Thess. 1:9-10). Part of Repentance is turning from the life of sin and lies, to the New LIFE of Truth in Christ. That would always result in folks abandoning the old beliefs and pagan practices (or should). That is what was happening (see Acts 19:18-20 – confessing their sins, burning magic books, etc.). If a person was a worshipper of Artemis (Diana), when that person came to Christ, he/she would NO longer worship Artemis (Diana) nor would he/she buy any more statues or paraphernalia of that goddess anymore in the future. Thus, it would hit the **bottom-line of those Silversmiths that Demetrius was a part of, etc. They were going out of business.**

We've seen two motivations of Persecution in Acts → Religious Jealousy and Financial Loss. In this case it is both, kind of. Primarily, it is Financial, but secondarily, it has a Religious connection as well → the worship of the goddess Artemis (Diana). It isn't really religious jealousy, but Religious Financial anger because of the loss of business of worship object that they make.

Behind the scenes, Satan is fomenting these kinds of persecution, but he works through fallen, sinful humans. So, he has to fan the flames of some sort of already existing sinful passion or motivation. But, even, without Satan, folks will have a natural tendency to Oppose the Gospel.

Romans 8:5-8 & 1 Cor. 2:14 → Natural, Fallen, Humans are enemies of God, God's Word, God's Law, God's way of thinking – deep in their mind, in the way they think ... and they will not and cannot receive the “things of the Spirit” → God's Word which relates to Obeying God and Living for God as a Christian. They will Oppose God's Way – The Way – In Christ.

- 4. The Riot of Ephesus – keepers of the Temple of Artemis (Diana) – Acts 19:28-34**
Demetrius' loud complaint against the Gospel (Paul, the Gospel, the church, etc.) and the Gospel connection to their business losses (you have to find out who's fault it is) ... it hit home and the Guild Members went wild → and they cried out Allahu Akbar oh I'm sorry
→ Great is Artemis (Diana) of the Ephesians. (Allahu Akbar → Allah is the Greatest)
Then this fire caught other folks on fire and the whole city (of those not saved in Christ and of those who were not Jewish, etc.) → they went to the Theater.
In the confusion, rush of rioters grabbed those with Paul, but not Paul himself – Gaius and Aristarchus who were Macedonians (foreigners – it's always those foreigners who did it, or the butler – Macedonians → from Berea, Thessalonica, and Philippi, etc.)
Satan inspired Demetrius, and then stoked the flames of the furnace of this riot with those original group of Silversmiths who were angry because of their business losses. Then Satan continued to stir up the crowd that joined in ... Sin never makes sense – God is never the Author of Confusion – Satan is → 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 Original Reason of this “Protest” got out of control – most didn't even know why they were there – the “Herd Mentality” – like sheep without a shepherd.

It turned out that Paul had friends in high places (Acts 19:31 – officials of Asia (Asiarchs))
Then some of the officials of Asia, who were his [Paul's] friends, sent to him pleading that he would not venture into the theater. → the Impact of the Paul's longevity there in Ephesus – bore some fruit – even in this situation. Sometimes the impact of the Gospel might surprise us.

Alexander (that doesn't sound like a Jewish name ... Acts 19:33-34)
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. 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!”

In the Diaspora many Jews took on Greek names – but were still Jews (maybe a wee bit less orthodox as well – trying to fit in – **just like today**). Once they saw that he is was a Jew – even though he might’ve fit in at other times, not at this occasion – this was Ephesian Patriotic Religious fervor – devotion to their goddess Artemis / Diana – and Jews weren’t invited. Two hours chanting – shutting down the whole city ... sound just like Islamic Fervor today, seen all over the world – crying out Allahu Akbar (Allah is the Greatest – or Great is Allah of the Muslims)

5. **Civic Resolution** → Acts 19:35-41 → “Now Shame on You-All” or “Y’all” ... what in heavens name ... ? (That’s how we’d say it here in South Carolina)

The City Clerk – said the truth about Paul and His Gospel Missionary Team:

When Paul and His Team were Preaching, Teaching, Spreading the Gospel – They were proclaiming the Truth of Jesus Christ from the Word of God. They were describing and proclaiming the True and Living God, the God of Israel. They were proclaiming and describing our sinfulness and our need for a Savior from the Wrath of the One, True, and Living Creator God because of our sinfulness. They were Proclaiming Jesus Christ (Yeshua the Messiah of Israel) as the Savior of all humans. They did not come into town proclaiming and exposing the Falsity and Stupidity of Worshipping Artemis / Diana – or how dangerous it was to be involved in the Demonic Magical Dark Arts (i.e.: book burning) that was also deeply engrained in Ephesus. No – they just Proclaimed the Gospel Truth – from the Word of God. When folks responded in Repentance and Faith in Christ to the Message of the Gospel, the normal pattern was that these folks would turn away from their old sinful life, practices and beliefs and follow Christ according the Bible, alone, per the Apostle’s teachings, etc. (i.e. 2 years, school of Tyrannus – more than 3 years in Ephesus, total time - teaching the whole counsel of God – Acts 20:17-30)

The City Clerk stated the truth of the facts on the ground – Artemis / Diana – her image fell from heaven (from Zeus) – a meteorite – just like the one in Mecca (the Black Stone of Allat). She was worshipped there in Ephesus – the patron goddess/god of the City – with her world-famous Temple – Ephesus was known as the keeper of the Worship of Artemis – her home on earth, so to speak. **Henotheists** – they were Polytheists, worshipping other gods and goddesses, but their Main god or goddess, in this case was Artemis / Diana. This was normal all over the world – in Abraham’s day – even in Muhammad’s day (the founder of Islam). Worshipping a God, who claimed to be the only God, the creator of everything (the Heavens and the Earth, etc.), claiming to be the only Living and True God and the only one we should worship, follow, obey, and love – that was quite unusual. Even when Egypt did that for a while, led by Akhenaten, it was **not** to worship a God that is the Only Creator – but just one of the primary gods – **Aten** – the sun god (also known as Amun).

When Paul, his team, and the church of Ephesus proclaimed the Gospel in Ephesus and the surrounding region – they focused their message. They did not try to denigrate the gods and goddess of the people. The Gospel embraced would do that on its own in the lives of those Born Again in Christ.

The Courts are Open – bring any charges – formally – in the correct manner. (Act 19:38-41) 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. ³⁹ But if you have any other inquiry to make, it shall be determined in the lawful assembly. 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.” ⁴¹ And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly.

In this case the City Clerk actually defended and justified Paul, his team, the church of Ephesus.

Proverbs 11:10

By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted, but it is overthrown by the mouth of the

wicked. (the mouth of the wicked → Demetrius | the Upright → the church / Paul)

Proverbs 29:8

Scoffers set a city aflame, but wise men turn away wrath.

(scoffers → Demetrius, the other Silversmiths, and the riotous crowd ...

wise men → a wise man → the City Clerk)

The impact of the Gospel can overcome even the greatest of opposition – and so it is with our lives – nothing should shut us down, quiet us down, cause us to go into hiding – regarding the Gospel. We must keep pressing forward with God and His Word ... AMEN?!!!