

**Woodland Baptist Church**  
**January 30, 2013 - Wednesday Night in the Word**  
**Acts 19:21-41 - Mobbing over Souvenirs**

**1) OPENING REMARKS**

- a) Luke's account of Paul's third missionary journey is essentially a record of Paul's ministry in Ephesus, the city he probably tried to reach at the beginning of his second journey (cf. 16:6). [Constable]
- b) This scene recounts Paul's final missionary swing through the Greco-Roman world. [Bock]
- c) We have in affect 4 scenes [Bock]:
  - i) vs. 1-7, Paul with the disciples of the Baptist
  - ii) vs. 8-20, Paul's ministry and confrontation with the Jewish exorcists
  - iii) vs. 21-22, Paul's travel plans
  - iv) vs. 23-41, the demonstration by the Ephesians on behalf of Artemis [riot]

**2) READ ACTS 19:21-41 - Summary of Movements**

- a) **21-22** Paul become resolved to return visit some of the churches he planted, go to Jerusalem and then to head west to Rome. This marks a major shift in his missionary planning...hence...resolved in spirit.
- b) **23-28** At the same time he has decided to head West, Ephesus erupts again, but this time much more violently, led by a silversmith, Demetrius, as he has seen the great change in cash flow because of Paul's missionary efforts.
- c) **28-31** The angry guild of silversmith and artisans get together and flood the streets, seize Gaius and Aristarchus, some of Paul's travel companions, and bring them into the theatre to threaten them and bring accusations. Paul is convinced to not get involved by some local civic officials.
- d) **32-34** Alexander the Jew is put forward by the Jew to try to address the crowd, but he is quickly put down by the shouting.
- e) **35-41** The town clerk quiets the crowd, speaks to them and when it is over they disperse peacefully.

**3) READ ACTS 19:21-41**

- a) This is the longest narrative in the Ephesian section, showing its importance for the narrator. [Pillar 4x]

- b) Angry protests against Paul and his travel companions follow the claim that his preaching has had a profound economic and religious effect 'on practically the whole province of Asia.'
- c) Although the clerk recognizes the innocence of Paul's travel companions (Gaius and Aristarchus), he naively assumes that the Christian criticism of idolatry has no great significance.
- d) Although the impression is given that this kind of treatment from the authorities is no basis of confidence for future security in the face of mounting religious, economic, and social antagonism.

4) **Verses 21-22** Believers will have a STRATEGY to SPREAD the gospel

- a) **21 Now after these events Paul resolved in the Spirit to pass through Macedonia and Achaia and go to Jerusalem, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome." 22 And having sent into Macedonia two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while.**

- i) Resolved in spirit - combination of God's sovereignty and man's free will [Utley]
- ii) Erastus - Romans 16:17-23 - Paul's final instructions and greetings to the church of Rome, we see Timothy and Erastus' names.

(1) There is an echo here of the Gospel narratives in which Jesus is shown to be under a divine necessity to go to Jerusalem to suffer [Mk 10:33-34, Lk 9:51, 13:31-35]

- iii) **Romans 15:23-33** - 22 This is the reason why I have so often been hindered from coming to you. 23 But now, since I no longer have any room for work in these regions, and since I have longed for many years to come to you, 24 I hope to see you in passing as I go to Spain, and to be helped on my journey there by you, once I have enjoyed your company for a while. 25 At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem bringing aid to the saints. 26 For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some contribution for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem. 27 For they were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material blessings. 28 When therefore I have completed this and have delivered to them what has been collected, I will leave for Spain by way of you. 29 I know that when I come to you I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ. 30 I appeal to you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf, 31 that I may be

delivered from the unbelievers in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, 32 so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and be refreshed in your company. 33 May the God of peace be with you all. Amen. [Dr. David Michal of the MBCB used this passage at our last associational meeting in Starkville]

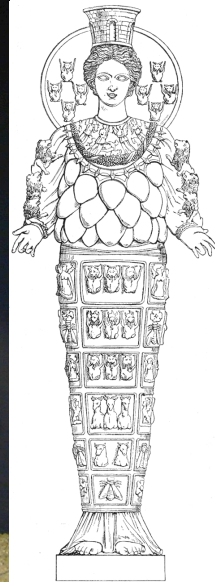
- b) The purpose of the final trip to Jerusalem is not explained, though we know from Paul's letters that it involved the presentation of financial gifts from the Gentile churches for the relief of the poor Christians in Jerusalem. This would have been a primary reason to send his two travel companions ahead, to go ahead and get started with the work at hand to prepare to go to Jerusalem.

5) **Verses 23-28** The gospel causes a SEPARATION and UNIFICATION

- i) **Matthew 10:34-39** - 34 "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. 35 For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. 36 And a person's enemies will be those of his own household. 37 Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38 And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. 39 Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

- (1) The gospel will harden those that reject it through the power of Satan, causing them to fight against it, and will unify those that accept it by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- b) **23 About that time there arose no little disturbance concerning the Way. 24 For a man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought no little business to the craftsmen. 25 These he gathered together, with the workmen in similar trades, and said, "Men, you know that from this business we have our wealth. 26 And you see and hear that not only in Ephesus but in almost all of Asia this Paul has persuaded and turned away a great many people, saying that gods made with hands are not gods. 27 And there is danger not only that this trade of ours may come into disrepute but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis may be counted as nothing, and that she may even be deposed from her magnificence, she whom all Asia and the world worship."**

- i) Artemis was a virgin who helped women in childbirth, a huntress armed with a bow, the goddess of death [Pillar].
- c) **23 About that time there arose no little disturbance concerning the Way. 24 For a man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought no little business to the craftsmen.**
- i) **The Way** - the earliest designation for Christianity - Acts 9:2, 19:9, 23; 22:4, 24:14 [Utley], describes a lifestyle of faith in Christ.
- ii) **Demetrius, a silversmith** - he was a craftsman that worked with metals and he made 'silver shrines of Artemis' specifically.
- iii) **silver shrines of Artemis** - refers to small silver images of the Temple of Artemis itself or the meteorite which looked like a multi-breasted woman.



(1)

- iv) **No little business** - they were making a fortune on selling "Artemis" souvenirs. It is recorded that there were over 200 such sites across Asia that sold things related to Artemis.
- v) **craftsman** - we get the word "technician"
- d) **25 These he gathered together, with the workmen in similar trades, and said, "Men, you know that from this business we have our wealth. 26 And you see and hear that not only in Ephesus but in almost all of Asia this Paul has persuaded and turned away a great many people, saying that gods made with hands are not gods. 27 And there is danger not only that this trade of ours may come into disrepute but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis may be counted as nothing, and that she may even be deposed from her magnificence, she whom all Asia and the world worship."**

i) Wealth - the gospel will always affect money one way or another.

(1) The primary issue here was **money**, but Demetrius was crafty enough to develop three more respectable motives for concern [Stott].

(a) Dangers that their trade would lose it's good name

(b) The temple would lose it's prestige

(c) Their goddess, her divine majesty.

(2) No doubt Paul would have quoted **Isaiah 44:9-20**

6) Verses 28-31 Threatening one's \_\_\_\_\_ can lead to \_\_\_\_\_

a) **28 When they heard this they were enraged and were crying out, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" 29 So the city was filled with the confusion, and they rushed together into the theater, dragging with them Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians who were Paul's companions in travel. 30 But when Paul wished to go in among the crowd, the disciples would not let him. 31 And even some of the Asiarchs, who were friends of his, sent to him and were urging him not to venture into the theater.**

i) When they heard this they were **enraged** - [pleres thymos] full of anger - goes along with passionate outbursts. Notice that what was in the heart came out of the mouth!

(1) **Luke 4:27-30** - 27 And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian." 28 When they heard these things, all in the synagogue were **filled with wrath**. 29 And they rose up and drove him out of the town and brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw him down the cliff. 30 But passing through their midst, he went away.

(2) Filled with **confusion** - [synchysis] - tumult, confusion - an uncontrollable uproar.

ii) Theatre - this was probably the Arcadian Way, the main thoroughfare of Ephesus, eleven meters wide, marble-paved and colonnade, leading from the harbor to the theatre [Stott]. It could accommodate at least 25,000 people.

- (1) **Gaius** - Acts 20:4 - 4 Sopater the Berean, son of Pyrrhus, accompanied him; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy; and the Asians, Tychicus and Trophimus.
- (2) **Aristarchus** - Colossians 4:10 - 10 Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, and Mark the cousin of Barnabas (concerning whom you have received instructions—if he comes to you, welcome him),
- iii) **Asiarchs** - leading citizens, who were prominent members of the provincial council of Asia, especially its 'annual presidents and perhaps ex-presidents', and/or the city's deputies who served on it, and/or 'the administrators of the various temples of the imperial cult, who were under the charge of the high priests appointed by the provincial council [Stott]
- (1) That Paul had friends among the Asiarchs indicates that, in contrast to the common populace, the Roman government did not perceive Christianity as a threat - [Ger]
- (2) **James 1:19-21** - 19 Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; 20 for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. 21 Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.
- iv) Why was Paul encouraged not to enter into the chaos? Probably because his presence would add to the confusion and cause the riot to escalate. He may have been killed.

7) Verses 32-34 Idolatrous \_\_\_\_\_ can ignite uncontrollable \_\_\_\_\_

- a) **32 Now some cried out one thing, some another, for the assembly was in confusion, and most of them did not know why they had come together. 33 Some of the crowd prompted Alexander, whom the Jews had put forward. And Alexander, motioning with his hand, wanted to make a defense to the crowd. 34 But when they recognized that he was a Jew, for about two hours they all cried out with one voice, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"**
- i) *Most of them did no know why they had come together* - can you imagine going along with the crowd, inciting mob violence against other people, while not having the faintest idea as to why they are there.

- (1) Why was Alexander prompted to stand up to speak? Possibly the Jews were trying to make sure the crowd understood that they were not responsible for this problem this time?
- (a) **Matthew Henry** - Alexander beckoned with the hand, desiring to be heard against Paul for it had been strange if a persecution had been carried on against the Christians and there were not Jews at one end or the other of it: if they could not begin the mischief, they would help it forward, and so make themselves partakers of other men's sins. Some think this Alexander had been a Christian, but had apostatized to Judaism, and therefore was drawn out as a proper person to accuse Paul and that he was the Alexander the coppersmith that did Paul so much evil ([2 Timothy 4:14](#)), and whom he had delivered unto Satan, [1 Timothy 1:20](#).
- (2) When the mob realized that Alexander was Jewish, it fueled their pagan rage all the more [Ger].
- ii) "In the final analysis the only thing heathenism can do against Paul is to shout itself hoarse." [Haenchen]
- b) **Matthew Henry** - The mob was in a perfect confusion ([Acts 19:32](#)): Some cried one thing and some another, according as their fancies and passions, and perhaps the reports they received, led them. Some cried, "Down with the Jews" others, "Down with Paul" but the assembly was confused, as not understanding one another's minds. They contradicted one another, and were ready to fly in one another's faces for it, but they did not understand their own for the truth was the greater part knew not wherefore they had come together. They knew not what began the riot, nor who, much less what business they had there but, upon such occasions, the greatest part come only to enquire what the matter is: they follow the cry, follow the crowd, increase like a snow-ball, and where there are many there will be more.
- c) **34 But when they recognized that he was a Jew, for about two hours they all cried out with one voice, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"**
- i) **Galatians 5:19-21** - 19 Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these.

8) Verses 35-41 God has ordained \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ in the hostility

a) **35 And when the town clerk had quieted the crowd, he said, "Men of Ephesus, who is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple keeper of the great Artemis, and of the sacred stone that fell from the sky? 36 Seeing then that these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rash. 37 For you have brought these men here who are neither sacrilegious nor blasphemers of our goddess. 38 If therefore Demetrius and the craftsmen with him have a complaint against anyone, the courts are open, and there are proconsuls. Let them bring charges against one another. 39 But if you seek anything further, it shall be settled in the regular assembly. 40 For we really are in danger of being charged with rioting today, since there is no cause that we can give to justify this commotion." 41 And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly.**

i) Who is this town clerk and what is his case that dispels the mob so well?

(1) **Grammateus** - he was a keeper of records, registrar and accountant for temple funds. He was the highest civic official in the city, operating much like a powerful city manager and serves as the city's liaison to Roman authorities. Elected locally, this town clerk would be aware that the temple has been radically impacted by what is happening in the city. His voice would count for a great deal on this matter, especially given that he represents the city that is seen as the keeper of the temple.

b) **"Men of Ephesus, who is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple keeper of the great Artemis, and of the sacred stone that fell from the sky?"**

i) The town clerk was saying that Ephesus was especially blessed by the presence of a heaven-sent image that was identified with Artemis - nothing should disturb the self-confidence of a city dedicated by divine visitation of the worship of Artemis.

c) **36 Seeing then that these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rash. 37 For you have brought these men here who are neither sacrilegious nor blasphemers of our goddess.**



- i) Since this is the case, these men need to be left alone as they have not done anything to harm Artemis.
  - (1) **Sacrilegious** - hierosylos - temple robber - there was no evidence that they had robbed the temple.
  - (2) **Blasphemers** - blasphemeo - to speak ill against the reputation of someone or something; there was no evidence that the men had spoken ill of the temple of Artemis.
    - (a) Probably why Paul was encouraged not to speak, he would have quickly, given the opportunity in this large crowd, condemned Artemis and most likely been killed.
  
- d) **38 If therefore Demetrius and the craftsmen with him have a complaint against anyone, the courts are open, and there are proconsuls. Let them bring charges against one another. 39 But if you seek anything further, it shall be settled in the regular assembly.**
  - i) The clerk instructs them to handle the situation through the proper channels if there is any true merit to the situation. The “courts” are open, all this happening during business hours, they could seek the proconsuls and file formal charges against the men.
  - ii) If there was anything more urgent than that, they would have to wait until the regular assembly convened.
    - (1) We saw a very similar situation happen with Pontius Pilate with Christ and with Peter and John when they are brought before the Sanhedrin.
  
- e) **40 For we really are in danger of being charged with rioting today, since there is no cause that we can give to justify this commotion.”**
  - i) A city charged with riotous behavior could lose the respect of Roman officials, guilds which caused trouble could be disbanded, city officials could be punished, and a city could even lose its freedom [Peterson].

## 9) CLOSE

- a) This situation could be alluded to in **2 Corinthians 1:8-11** - 8 For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. 9 Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. 10 He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again.
- b) This major unit in Acts shows how the transformation of a community affects the culture at large, making it so nervous that it reacts to stop the progress. Basically we see effective internal reform. What affects the commerce of idolatry in Ephesus is apparently not a program to stamp out magic but the change of lifestyle among the believers, which entails separating themselves from such practices.
- c) The second lesson of the unit is that those who do not wish to be transformed will often react with hostility to the evidence of a lifestyle that challenges their own. Once again however, the believers are not on a campaign against others. They allow the difference in lifestyle to speak for itself, and they trust in God's protection in the midst of the testimony. This protection comes in part from outsiders who also have a sense of justice and fairness. When those who desire fairness speak up, the church is protected.