

EPHESUS: WHAT A RIOT!

Acts 19:21-41

I. Unpacking the Text

A. The Corinth-Ephesus Connection

1. A New Pattern of Ministry –

- a. Proclamation of Jesus in the synagogue
- b. Response of faith by some Jews and God-fearers
- c. Opposition by unbelieving Jews
- d. Shift of ministry focus to Gentiles in a neutral (Gentile-friendly) venue
- e. Divine encouragement (via vision [Corinth] and/or supernatural miracles [Ephesus] plus positive response of faith.
- f. Long-term ministry in an urban base of operations
- g. On-going opposition from sectarian groups: Jewish (Corinth) and Gentile (Ephesus)
- h. Intervention by governmental official that put an end to the threat.
- i. Departure for next phase of ministry.

2. Dealing with Paul’s dysfunctional children – the Corinthians

- a. *First visit*: Establishment of the church at Corinth – Acts 18
- b. Ministry in Ephesus – Acts 19
- c. **First Letter** – The “misunderstood” letter (1 Cor. 5:9-11 – now lost).
- d. Report by Chloe (1 Cor. 1:11) and Stephanus, Fortunatus, and Achaicus (1 Cor. 16:17)
- e. **Second Letter** – 1 Corinthians (delivered by Timothy and Erastus – Acts 19:22; 1 Cor. 16:10)
- f. *Second (“painful”) visit* – an emergency intervention (2 Cor. 2:1, 5, 7:12).
- g. **Third (“tearful”) letter** (2 Cor. 5:2-3; 7:8-9) – delivered by Titus
- h. Departure by Paul for Macedonia and rendezvous with Titus (2 Cor. 2:13; 7:5-6).
- i. **Fourth letter** – 2 Corinthians
- j. *Third visit* – Acts 20:2-3

B. A dramatic episode in Ephesus

1. Origin: A Craftsman’s Complaint (19:23-27)

- a. The cult and temple of Artemis (Diana): One of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World
- b. The problem: a down-turn in the silversmith’s business due to . . .
 - 1) Paul’s _____: “gods made with hands are not gods” (see Acts 17:29)
 - 2) The _____ of believers who joined “the Way.”
- c. Demetrius’ argument -- three appeals
 - _____: Our trade may come into disrepute
 - _____: The temple of the great goddess Artemis may be counted as nothing.
 - _____: She may be deposed of her magnificence.

2. Course: A Crowd's Confusion (19:28-34)

- a. Reaction: _____
- Began chanting, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians"
 - Rushed out to the (amphi)theater
 - Took Paul's travel companions, Gaius and Aristarchus, hostage
- b. Paul was dissuaded from his intention to intervene
- c. Alexander the Jew was shouted down
- d. Basic scene: _____ and endless chanting

3. Conclusion: A Clerk's Clear Thinking (19:35-41)

- a. The status of Artemis and of Ephesus (as "temple keeper") is safe.
- b. The men in custody are not guilty either of sacrilege (robbing the temple) or blasphemy (reviling the goddess).
- c. If anyone has legitimate charges, they may be presented before the courts (proconsuls) or the city council.
- d. We are in danger of being charged with civil disorder by the Romans.

II. Illustrations/Principles for Present-Day Disciples

- A. "The Way" is a new way of life that is different in . . .
- what we _____
 - how we _____
 - what we _____
- B. Perhaps the best way to make a positive moral impact on the culture is through _____ and the _____ behavior of converts.
- C. Until Jesus returns and remakes a sin-free world, "The Way" will always be _____ - _____
The gospel will set some people free; it will make others _____. "Any Christianity worth its salt will be a challenge to the pocketbook, the flag and the shrine" (Wm. J. Larkin).
- D. Hostility to the gospel is a reaction to its challenge of one's _____ - _____
- What is announced as good news is heard as bad news.
 - The apparent "freedom" of self-advancement is actually a form of _____.
- E. In the sovereign outworking of God's purposes, sometimes the culture is our enemy and sometimes it is our friend.

Conclusion: Regardless of the response, our calling to _____ what we believe.