

# Abounding Grace Christian Church

## The Acts of the Holy Spirit through the Church – Part 60

### I. Exposition of Chapter Nineteen (Continued).

#### A. Verses 21-41 - The Riot in Ephesus.

1. Verses 21-22 – **“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.’ So he sent into Macedonia two of those who ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus, but he himself stayed in Asia for a time.”**
  - a. Verse 21 – **“When these things were accomplished...”** – This has the idea that everything God had planned for Paul, up to this point, was accomplished in Ephesus. The two year period (verse 10) has now been completed.
  - b. Verse 21 – **“...Paul purposed in the Spirit...”** – Most seem to agree that this is, most likely, referring to the Holy Spirit rather than his human spirit. Stanley Horton makes an important point when he states: **“We can be sure also that Paul’s own spirit was in harmony with, and submissive to, the Holy Spirit. His purpose therefore was a holy purpose, a God-planned purpose.”**<sup>1</sup> (cf. I Corinthians 6:17). Seeing this is the case, we continue to see the activity and guidance of the Holy Spirit at work.
  - c. Verse 21- **“...when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia...”** Even though Luke doesn’t mention it here, we know from other references that one reason Paul wanted to go through Macedonia and Achaia, and then to Jerusalem, was to collect and deliver an offering he had been collecting from other churches to help out the church in Jerusalem (cf. Romans 15:25-31; I Corinthians 16:1-4). We can also be certain that Paul was wanting to strengthen the faith of the believers as well.
  - d. Verse 21 – **“After I have been there, I must also see Rome.”** – It seems clear that God had placed it on Paul’s heart that he would be going to Rome after he stopped in Jerusalem. He did end up going to Rome but not the way he envisioned going. He will be going as a prisoner (28:16).
  - e. Verse 22- Paul stayed in Asia Minor (Ephesus) and sent Timothy and Erastus ahead to Macedonia. Grant Osborne writes:

**“Paul is not quite ready to leave Ephesus yet, so he sends his ‘assistants’ or ‘helpers’ (NIV), Timothy and Erastus, ahead to Macedonia (19:22) to prepare for his coming. Timothy is the better known to us, as he worked alongside Paul for so long, but Erastus is by far his social superior. He was probably the Erastus who was treasurer over all of Corinth (Rom 16:23; see also 2 Tim 4:20). That such a high official would come to Ephesus in order to assist Paul in his ministry shows the incredible change the gospel made in people. For one of the highest officials in Corinth to work side by side with a mere young man of no special societal status was even more unusual then than it would be today.”**<sup>2</sup>

#### 2. Verses 23-41 – A Riot in Ephesus.

- a. Verse 23 – **“And about that time there arose a great commotion about the Way.”** – The word **“commotion”** means; **“a serious disturbance.”**<sup>3</sup> Note that it states that this disturbance was **“...about the Way”**. We saw this back in 9:2 and 19:9. Again, it was an early name for the Christian faith.
- b. Verse 24 – **“For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Diana, brought no small profit to the craftsmen.”** The New Living Translation starts this verse off this way; **“It began with Demetrius,....”** Sometimes it only takes one person to gather a crowd of discontents. (Note: This is all we know about this Demetrius. It was a common Greek name so this man was probably a different Demetrius than the one later commended for his faith in III John 1:12.)
- c. **“...made silver shrines of Diana...”** – Some translations use the name **“Artemis”** rather than Diana. **“Artemis”** is from the Greek and would be more accurate here and **“Diana”** was from the Latin which would be Roman. Concerning the worship of Artemis, one Bible dictionary states:

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<sup>1</sup>Stanley M. Horton, *Acts: A Logion Press Commentary* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2001), 326.

<sup>2</sup>Grant R. Osborne, *Acts: Verse by Verse*, Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 349.

<sup>3</sup>Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 492.

**“The most famous statue was located in the city of Ephesus, the official ‘temple keeper’ for Artemis. Artemis was the chief deity of Ephesus, and her temple was one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world.”<sup>4</sup>**

d. Dr. Bob Utley explains what is meant by “silver shrines”:

**“This refers to small silver images (1) of the Temple of Artemis or (2) the meteorite which looked like a multi-breasted woman. Archaeology has found many silver images of this goddess, but none of the shrine (temple) itself. It was one of the seven wonders of the world. Its base was 100 feet by 340 feet. It had 177 columns that were 55 feet tall and 6 feet thick. It was four times larger than the Partheon in Athens”<sup>5</sup>**

e. **Verses 25-26** – Here we see that Demetrius’ concern wasn’t really for a goddess he truly believed in, but was all about financial loss (**Verse 25** – “...we have our prosperity by this trade.”) Demetrius makes an astounding statement in **verse 26**: “...but throughout almost all Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away many people...” Paul’s preaching that man-made idols are not gods was ruining their idol-making business. What a powerful testimony of the power of the Gospel!! Multitudes turning to Christ was affecting the entire city and region in such a way that the idol worship, which was big business, was beginning to struggle financially!! God can still change entire cities and regions today!!!

f. **Verse 27** – “...this trade of ours in danger of falling into disrepute...” – The word “disrepute” means; “serious and strong criticism based upon presumed evidence.”<sup>6</sup> The Amplified Bible renders **verse 27**:

**“Now there is danger not merely that this trade of ours may be discredited, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis may come into disrepute and count for nothing, and that her glorious magnificence may be degraded and fall into contempt—she whom all [the province of] Asia and the wide world worship.”**

g. **Verse 28** – “Now when they heard *this*, they were full of wrath and cried out, saying, ‘Great is Diana of the Ephesians!’” - Grant Osborne offers some good insights:

**“With this final warning, the place erupted with fury as the crowd started screaming (19:28), ‘Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!’ This became a virtual war cry, for the city identified itself with their patron goddess and viewed Paul’s preaching as an attack on the virtual life and prosperity of Ephesus itself. The anger and excitement grew, and soon the whole city was enveloped and in an uproar against these Christians.”<sup>7</sup>**

h. **Verse 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.” – Gaius was a believer from Derbe which would have been in Galatia and Aristarchus was from Thessalonica (cf. 20:4; 27:2; Colossians 4:10). Our adversary the devil specializes in bringing confusion.

**“But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.” James 3:14-16 (cf. I Corinthians 14:33).**

i. **Verses 30-31** – “And when Paul wanted to go in to the people, the disciples would not allow him. Then some of the officials of Asia, who were his friends, sent to him pleading that he would not venture into the theater.” – Paul must have been in another location when the riot broke out. When he heard of it, he wanted to go into the theater to probably make his case to the people which would certainly include preaching the Gospel. Thank God for loyal and loving believers who saw the danger and wouldn’t allow Paul to go in. Regarding the “...officials of Asia, who were his friends...”, Stanley Toussaint states:

**“They were *Asiarchs* (lit., ‘rulers of Asia’), in charge of the community’s political and religious welfare. They would be on good terms with Rome and therefore would evidence Christianity’s good standing with the government.”<sup>8</sup>**

j. **Verse 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.” - This is still the

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<sup>4</sup>Chad Brand et al., eds., “Artemis,” *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 121.

<sup>5</sup>Robert James Utley, *Luke the Historian: The Book of Acts*, vol. Volume 3B, Study Guide Commentary Series (Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International, 2003), 225–226.

<sup>6</sup>Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 435.

<sup>7</sup>Grant R. Osborne, *Acts: Verse by Verse*, 352.

<sup>8</sup>Stanley D. Toussaint, “Acts,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 411–412.

case today. People just follow the crowd sometimes and don't even know what they're fighting against because they're so confused.