

- A Study in Acts -

Chapter Nineteen – Third Journey of Paul

ACTS 19:23-41:

We began the third journey in **Chapter 18:23**. Paul returned from the second journey to Antioch of Syria and then went out again to the region of **Galatia** and **Phrygia** strengthening the brethren in these locations; Luke tells us.

Please use the map provided.

Paul has come to **Ephesus** and has met and worked with disciples of the coming Messiah by the work of John the Baptist. He would now more accurately explain the way of God through Jesus Christ to them (see: **Acts 18:26**). Paul would continue to work in the synagogues of the Jews for 3 months; however, when some were hardened, he went to the school of Tyrannus and continued to teach from this singular location for two years, successfully bringing the Gospel's truth to all of Asia. At the conclusion of the events that transpired in the first two years of Ephesus (special miracles, false exorcists, and the word of the Lord growing mightily and prevailing). We will now investigate events that would make up the remainder of the time he would stay in **Ephesus**.

In our previous lesson, Paul staying in Ephesus “**For a time**” –**Acts 19:22**; would become aware of problems in the **Body of Christ** at **Corinth** (messengers from the household of Chloe – **1 Corinthians 1:11**, and a letter composed by the brethren and sent to him – **7:1**), he would write the first letter to them and send it by Titus (**2 Corinthians 2:12-13; 7:6-7**).

Now we will move into events that will cause Paul to change his plans prematurely (he wanted to stay here in Ephesus until Pentecost (**1 Corinthians 16:8**); which he believed was enough time for Titus to return with a report while he was still in Ephesus. However, these events starting in our text will cause Paul to leave before he wants and take the route, he assumes Titus will take in coming to him.

Text #1:

Acts 19:23-28 “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, “Great is Diana of the Ephesians!””

The Way: This is the third of four times that this term is used of the disciples of Jesus Christ (saints) – see: **9:2; 19:9; 22:4**. This term is a direct reference to the words of the Lord Himself in describing the only “Way” to come to God – **John 14:6**. The Christ of God is additionally the only **Door** – **John 10:8-9**; the only **Light** – **2 Corinthians 4:6**; the only **Bread** and the only **Water** – **John 6:48-51; 7:37-38**; the only **Vine** – **John 15:1, 5**; and the only **Name** – **Acts 4:12; Philippians 2:9-11**.

Demetrius: This citizen of Ephesus is one who has made himself a healthy living by taking advantage of the people by making and selling his silver symbols of Artemis (Diana), to the people. He is now erupting against Paul, who is converting many out of idolatry and affecting his income.

The Jews persecuted Paul often because he preached Jesus as the Christ; however, the Gentiles only persecuted Paul for His work in the Gospel when it effected their livelihood.

There are some good photos in the introduction to Ephesus that will help define both the temple and the shrines of Artemis.

Text #2:

Acts 19:29-34 “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!””

City was Filled with Confusion: Demetrius and the guild of silversmiths caused an uproar because their way of making money was in danger. However, they used another reason to stir up the city; that is, Paul was trying to make their great goddess Artemis (Diana) of no account.

Paul Wanted to go in to the People: The mob had taken two of Paul’s companions, Gaius and Aristarchus into the theatre (Gaius is a very popular name in the New Testament – this one is probably the one also known as Secundus of Thessalonica; **Acts 20:4** and Aristarchus is also mentioned in that same passage, as well as traveling with Paul to Rome; **Acts 27:2**, and in Rome with Paul; **Colossians 4:10; Philemon 24**).

Paul wanted to go in and help them, but the disciples, and the officers in charge of the festivals, talked him out of it (they were his friends). Paul would speak of this great trouble for his companions and himself in his second letter to the Corinthians (**2 Corinthians 1:8-11**).

Assembly: The Greek word used here in its generic sense (and in **Verse 41**), is the word “*ecclesia*”, which in its generic use simply means “The called out”. Here it is used in its most simplistic form and is identifying the people of Ephesus who have been “called out” by the ruckus to a central location. For the **Body of Christ**, it is defined as the “called out” of the world (sin and Satan), into a relationship with God through Christ Jesus – See: **Acts 26:18**; and often translated in our English Bibles as, “Church”.

Alexander: Was a Jew and was evidently put forward by the Jews to add to Paul’s affliction; however, it didn’t work since the Jews didn’t serve idols and spoke against it as well. This effort caused the mass of Ephesians to cry out for two hours.

Text #3:

Acts 19:35-41 “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.”

City Clerk: We are going to be given a view of the wisdom of this city clerk who is burdened with stopping this riot before the Romans, who govern here, do (**Vs. 40**). Here is a quick list of the logical systematic defense he uses to defuse the situation:

1. To an Ephesian, what they are upset about cannot be refuted (**Vs. 35**).
2. No true crime has been committed by the existing laws (**Vs. 36-37**).
3. Even if there has truly been wrong done, there is a right way of doing things (legally), **vs. 38-41**.

Next: “Journey to Greece!”