

“A City Full of Confusion”

Acts 19:21-41, ESV

INTRODUCTION: One consistent pattern we observe in Acts is the conflict between the truth of Christ and the false doctrine of idolatry. As we have followed in the steps of Paul’s missionary journeys, we have seen intense controversy, hostility, uproar, and mindless reaction. Only by the providential intervention of God, has Paul survived to this point. The text this morning finds Paul in another hotbed of visceral reaction-Ephesus!

CONTEXT: Ephesus is steeped in idolatry. The temple of Diana [or Artemis, Greek], one of the ancient wonders of the world, was in Ephesus. This temple was four times the size of the Parthenon in Athens. The splendor of the temple of Diana was known worldwide. Particularly, there was a robust economy built around the worship of Diana.

1). THE CRUX OF THE MATTER (v. 23-27).

- ✓ A “disturbance” arose concerning the Christian lifestyle (v. 23)
- ✓ A craftsman, Demetrius, stirred up opposition and hostility among the local guild of silversmiths, whose livelihoods depended on the worship of the goddess Artemis (v. 24-27).

Application: The preaching of the **uniqueness of Christ** will expose false religion. Demetrius paid attention to Paul’s message, but his livelihood depended on idol worship; thus, he rejected the message and Paul.

2). THE CONFUSION OF THE MOB (v. 28-34).

- ✓ The mob was enraged and began shouting, “*Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!*”
- ✓ The city was full of confusion and spilled into the theater, dragging with them Paul’s travel companions.
- ✓ Paul was prevented from going by the disciples, including some Asiarchs, friends of his (v. 30-31).
- ✓ People are crying out various statements, most of them did not even know why they were there (v. 32).
- ✓ Alexander speaks...but is shouted down and for two hours the crowd vigorously and mindlessly shrieked, “*Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!*” (v. 33-34).

Application: It is a sad day when people are more concerned with their **financial** than their **spiritual** ruin.

3). THE CALM OF THE MAYOR (v. 35-41).

- ✓ The town clerk [mayor] of Ephesus calms the crowd- be quiet and do nothing rash (v. 36).
- ✓ The mayor correctly informs the mob that they are to blame for the unwarranted riot.
- ✓ The mayor insists that these men are neither sacrilegious nor blasphemers of their goddess (v. 37).
- ✓ The mayor counsels that they should follow proper procedure and take their complaints to the courts.
- ✓ The mayor charges that there is no legitimate cause to justify the present commotion.
- ✓ The assembly dismissed (v. 41).

Application: Praise God! We see another instance where the preaching the gospel was able to continue. Not exactly difficult to see what is going on here: the power of Satan, the progress of the gospel, and the wisdom of the city clerk.