

Ministry of The Holy Spirit
Uproar in Ephesus
Acts 19:21 – 20:3

Last time...Paul wrapped up his first letter to the Church at Corinth

Throughout 1 Cor 16 we gleaned an exhortation: Be a part of what God is doing!

This time...we return to Paul in Ephesus, during his 3rd missionary trip, and an uproar that breaks out because of his ministry

[map]

We are in Acts 19 and Acts 20 (with bookmark in 1 Cor 16)

Acts 19

v21a After these things ended...what things?

Acts 19:1-20

v21b Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, was directed by the Holy Spirit to

- go thru Macedonia
- get to Achaia/Corinth
- go to Jerusalem...center of the Jewish world

Why go to Corinth?

To collect their love offering to the persecuted saints in Jerusalem

1 Cor 16:1-5

Then, after ministering to the Church in Jerusalem, Paul intends to go to Rome...
center of the Gentile world

v22 While Paul stayed in Asia/Ephesus a while longer (1 Cor 16:8), he sent two of his
co-laborers in the Gospel on ahead into Macedonia

- Timothy (1 Cor 16:10-11)
- Erastus

And while Paul was in Ephesus...

v23 A real hub-bub, no minor disturbance, erupted over “that way”

- followers of Jesus Christ, pre-“Christianity” (as in v9)
- the way out of the world and into the kingdom of God
- John 14:6

v24 At the very heart of this disturbance is a silversmith named Demetrius

- persecutor of the Church in Ephesus
 - 1 Cor 15:32 if no resurrection, why put up with these?
 - 1 Cor 16:9
- builder of silver shrines for Diana
 - goddess of fertility
 - super carnal goddess made in the image of man
 - worshipped via sexual acts in her temple with temple prostitutes
 - aka
 - Ashtoreth by Babylon (corrupted Israel and Judah)
 - Aphrodite by Greece
 - Artemis by Rome
- as “general contractor”, made a bunch of money for the idol-making craftsmen

v25-26 Demetrius gathered all the Diana idol-making craftsmen and all the craftsmen of other idols...to stir them up against Paul and the Gospel he preached

All ya’ll know that making these idols is how we make a living...a very good living!
All ya’ll also have seen/experienced and have heard that not only here in Ephesus but throughout all of Asia we idol makers are losing many good-paying customers because of this character named Paul.

Paul has persuaded many people in our city and in these parts that gods made with our hands are not gods!

1 Cor 10:20

Acts 17:22-31

on 2nd missionary trip

v27 As a result of Paul and his message,

1. our craft/livelihood is in jeopardy of suffering great losses or utter ruin
2. the temple of the great goddess Diana will become despised by the people
3. the majesty/magnificence of Diana...the goddess we and all the Roman Empire worships...will be ruined

Diana was the “higher power” in Ephesus and in much of the Roman Empire
But Paul did not conduct AA meetings in Ephesus and in Asia, he bore witness of the OTL God, in Whose image we are created

Note: The Christian faith and the Gospel of Jesus Christ are NOT the foundation of AA/NA/etc
Every person has their own “higher power” to look to

Clearly, the 2 gods, messages, and camps are mutually opposed

v28 When all the assembled idol-makers heard the threat to their livelihoods and to their beloved goddess, they were outraged and professed their devotion to Diana

Nothing new under the sun!

1. People still get all worked up about money, don't they?
 - agitated, anxious, worried
 - job security
 - investments
 - makes them do crazy things...inheritance disputes
 - consumes them...chasing the dollar!

What would happen in this country if the dollar collapsed?

The stability, even dominance, of USD in world currency markets is due to the work of Henry Kissinger and Richard Nixon

After the collapse of the gold standard in the early 1970s, the USA struck a deal with Saudi Arabia to standardize oil prices in dollars. Through this deal, the “petrodollar” system was born...value of the dollar not based on gold but the price of oil

Petrodollars work as an exchange of U.S. dollars for oil.

An oil-importing country pays U.S. dollars to an oil-exporting country in exchange for oil

This past week, Saudi Arabia started talks with China to price some of its oil sales to China in yuan, a move that would dent the U.S dollar's dominance of the global petroleum market...weakening the value of the dollar

Can you imagine the fallout of the demise of the “almighty Dollar”?!!

Never forget, you followers of Jesus Christ:

Matt 6:24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Prov 23:4-5 Labour not to be rich...riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven.

2. Diana worship thrives unto this day

What do the Advertising and Entertainment industries (including the massive
“Adult Entertainment” industry) vigorously sell?

Sex...”Sex sells”

USA is no different now than Ephesus was then

v29 The rage and the passion of the idol-making craftsmen was contagious
Soon, the entire city of Ephesus was filled with confusion

1 Cor 14:33

The city is in an uproar, a powder keg ready to blow!

The mob snags a couple of Paul’s travelling companions...Gaius and Aristarchus...
and everybody rushed into the theatre

Not an AMC or Harkins theatre

A Roman theatre ala Caesarea

Rome was big on keeping the people entertained so every Roman city had
a theatre for that purpose

The theatre in Ephesus could seat about 20,000 people...
big enough for this lathered up mob

v30-31 Undoubtedly hearing the uproar and being informed of Gaius’ and Aristarchus’
“kidnapping”, Paul was headed to the theatre

I think in Paul’s heart, the reason for his desire to go to the theatre, was

1. rescue his friends
2. “These lost souls need the Gospel!”

Rom 1:15-16 So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to
you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the
gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to
every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the
Greek.

Paul has the heart and mind of a First Responder

When others run from danger, First Responders run to the danger

Our son Matthew has the heart and mind of a First Responder, for which I have
great admiration and respect

But...

- the disciples in Ephesus...the church
- officials in Asia...obviously in or based in Ephesus

wisely assessed the situation in the theatre and determined Paul's presence there would be the match to cause the powder keg to blow

The uproar needed to settle, not be further inflamed by Paul's presence

Very firm in their wise counsel, Paul conceded
Discretion is the better part of valor

v32 In the theatre, we have mass confusion
Some people are screaming about this
Others are screaming about that
And most don't even know why they and everyone else are even there...
but they have been caught up in the heat of the uproar!

v33-34 At center stage: Alexander
Who is Alexander?
It is not clear

Either

He was a disciple of Paul, a believer in Jesus Christ known to the Jews, who was
"offered up" by the unbelieving Jews to the Greeks to answer for this
offensive "way"

Or

He was a Jew...an unbeliever, NOT a follower of Jesus Christ, not of "that way"

The Jews may have pushed Alexander on-stage to make clear the distinction
between Jews and "that way"

The uproar instigated by Demetrius, a persecutor of the Church, is targeted at Paul
and the followers of Jesus Christ..."that way"

Being not followers of Jesus Christ, the Jews want no part of this persecution

If Alexander is the latter, he was a thorn in Paul's flesh

1 Tim 1:18-20 This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck. Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.

2 Tim 4:14 Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works

Regardless, Alexander tried to quiet the rowdy crowd to make a defense but, once the Greek mob learned that Alexander was a Jew (no matter the “flavor”), it was “Game Over”

The mob loses its collective mind and for 2 solid hours chants “Great is Diana of the Ephesians!”

A New Age technique for meditation is to “empty one’s mind” by chanting a word or a phrase, until you enter an altered state of consciousness
This technique has infiltrated the Church – Contemplative Prayer
“Empty your mind so God can enter in.”

Problems:

- God NEVER tells us to empty our minds
- it isn’t God that enters in in the altered state of consciousness, it’s a demon!

v35 Alexander the Jew was not able to quiet and reason with the mob, he only made things worse

Therefore the town clerk, a Gov’t official, enters the theatre and is able to quiet the mob
And this cooler head speaks reason to them

A. Everybody knows that the great goddess Diana is worshipped here in Ephesus

B. Everybody knows the (?) fell down from Jupiter

- Jupiter was the supreme god in the Roman pantheon of gods
- what fell is thought to be a meteorite

Implied: Why have you been screaming and chanting like crazy people for 2 hours?
Are you trying to convince yourselves of what everybody already knows?

Q: Everybody knows...is this knowledge or faith?

Faith...a corrupted (by demons), blind, and unreasonable faith
(vs 1 Cor 15:3-4)

v36-37 The town clerk continues

C. Since these things (v35) are indisputable, you all should

1. be quiet – calm down, get a grip on yourselves!
2. not do anything rashly, driven by your wild and enflamed emotions

- D. These men (Gaius and Aristarchus) are not
1. robbers of your temples
not scammers or thieves
 2. yet blasphemers of the goddess Diana
have not said anything negative about your god
 3. (innocent of any wrong-doing)

v38-39 So what should you do?

E. If Demetrius has any charges to make against anyone, the Roman courts are open and proconsuls/deputies are ready to serve; let those with disputes bring their charges in court, not here!

F. And if you have demands about other matters (i.e. religious) it must be done in a lawful assembly, not by an unruly mob

Because...

v40 The reasoned Reality Check by the town clerk:

G. The Roman Empire has a Zero Tolerance policy regarding tumults/riots/insurrections

We are in danger of the Empire swooping in here, demanding to know what is going on, and we will have no explanation for this insurrection
You think your livelihoods are in jeopardy?
How about your freedom or even your lives?!

v41 The cooler head administered a collective Mennen Skin Bracer...

“Thanks! I needed that!”

and dismissed the calmed-down crowd and Paul’s companions – Go home!

The God of order restored order with civil Gov’t

Rom 13:1-5

Acts 20

v1-3a When everything had settled down, Paul says good-bye to Ephesus, headed to

1. Macedonia...to exhort the churches there

Acts 14:22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, *and* exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God

2. Greece/Achaia/Corinth...to collect their offering for the saints in Jerusalem (1 Cor 16:1-5)

And there in Corinth Paul stayed for 3 months...wintering (1 Cor 16:6)

v3b After wintering the 3 months, it is time to go to Jerusalem

Plan A: sail from Corinth to Syria...but murderous Jews were laying in wait

Plan B: the land route

And while in Corinth wintering for 3 months, Paul writes another letter – Romans

Acts 19:21

Application/Exhortation

A lesson in sharing the Gospel...1 Cor 15:3-4

The Gospel and the Cross of Jesus Christ are

- offensive to sinners, the flesh, and to the world
- diametrically opposed to the ways of the world

“Coexist”

- is not possible
- is a lie from the devil, the liar and deceiver

James 4:4 Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

1 John 2:15 Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

We followers of Jesus Christ have been delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the Light of the world

There is no fellowship with light and darkness

We are called to be separate from the world (2 Cor 6:14-18)...in the world but not of the world

Our message to those in darkness is the love and grace of God...Good News, not “bad news”...
the way out of the world and into the kingdom of God

Lessons in sharing the Gospel (Acts 19:37):

1. The Gospel is a gift from God, not a money-making scheme for greedy men using the name of God to make merchandise of others

Rom 3:10

Rom 3:23

Rom 6:23

Rom 5:1

Rom 10:9

The cost of the Gospel is the very highest imaginable, and paid in full by God Himself.

The Gospel is not for sale

2. The Gospel is...GOOD News

The ministry given to us is not a ministry of condemnation but
the ministry of reconciliation

Paul, Gaius, Aristarchus, etc did not go around bashing/denigrating Diana,
they spoke of the beauty of the Lord

Their message was pro-Jesus, not anti-Diana

They fought the darkness by...letting their Light shine!

Matt 5:16 *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your
good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

Sharing the Gospel is

- not an argument or a debate to be won
 - an invitation lovingly shared
 - a living witness...following Jesus by living according to the Word
- Cliff notes – Matt 22:36-40 and John 13:34-35 and James 2:8

3. And our zeal for the Lord must not be unchecked...
emotional/flesh vs spiritual/Spirit

My witness to my siblings after I was born again was over zealous and it damaged
my witness to them