

Acts (Part Twenty)

Acts 19: Diana (Artemis) Worship; Riot at Ephesus

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Given 07-Feb-89; Sermon #BS-AC20

Let us go back into the book of Acts. Perhaps one of the high points of the book of Acts as far as the apostle Paul is concerned, is reached in Acts the 18th chapter where he goes to Corinth, has a very successful year and a half there, where there were quite a number of conversions and a congregation raised up. We, of course, find out from I and II Corinthians that this fairly large congregation was a congregation filled with quite a number of problems. But as far as the book of Acts is concerned, those problems have not yet surfaced.

But as usual, there were problems within the city and Paul had to come before Gallio, the proconsul who was there; and Gallio was not at all taken by the Jews' approach to this dispute. He very quickly threw the case, as we would say, out of court, and he did it on the basis of his judgment that what he was looking at was an internal affair of the Jews. It seems pretty clear that he looked upon Christianity as being a sect of the Jews. It was an internal fight and it was not something that was to be brought before his civil court. And so he dismissed the case against the apostle Paul without even allowing him to speak on his behalf, just cut him right off. And as it says, he drove the Jews from the judgment seat. And always there was kind of a latent prejudice against the Jews; and the Greeks in the city beat up Sosthenes, who was the ruler of the synagogue and I guess that did away with that problem.

So Paul remained there a good while longer and we find him at the end of Acts the 18th chapter meeting Apollos, who becomes a fairly important figure in the Corinthian church. He was a man, as it says here, mighty in the Scriptures. He needed though to understand things a little bit more specifically, but when he was taught them by Priscilla and Aquila, he very quickly accepted them, and he went on then to, as it says in verse 28, "vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ." So Corinth was one of the more important stops in the apostle Paul's tours.

And now we come to chapter 19 and Ephesus where he has another pretty successful stay.

Acts 19:1 And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples, he said to them. . .

Most of the events here in chapter 19 deal with things that took place in Ephesus, and Paul is now on his third evangelistic campaign. Now you might remember in chapter 18, something that I neglected to put in there so that we could have a running start, that during the midst of that chapter, the apostle Paul completed a vow. And he left Corinth, went to Jerusalem to complete that vow. Remember, it says that he cut his hair and that hair had to be offered on the altar in Jerusalem. A very interesting insight into the apostle Paul's view of the law of God. He certainly did not look upon it as something that had no influence on his life. He just did not reject it right off. You do not go around making vows and cutting off your hair and things of that nature if you look upon that part of the law as being "done away" or "of no use to us at all."

He went to Jerusalem all the way from Corinth, then he went to Antioch and he stayed there for some time, it says in verse 23 of chapter 18. And then he went back up around the northeastern corner of the Mediterranean Sea into the area of Silesia, what is today central Turkey, and then heading west, he went over into Galatia and Phrygia. Now what he is doing, he is starting off on a new evangelistic campaign, and he is working his way west once again and he is going to approach and eventually come into Ephesus.

Now Paul was there one time before. That is also in chapter 18, verses 19 and 20. But it was on his return that Paul really struck pay dirt, if I can put it that way, if we can look upon many conversions as being pay dirt. And his stay there lasted three years, longer than any other time, at least up until this time, that he was ever in one place. The approximate dates were from sometime in 53 AD to 56 AD. So here he had a fairly large and vigorous church.

If you would, turn with me back to Revelation the second chapter. We find here a little vignette on the Ephesian church. Now this church became the model of one of the seven churches of Revelation 2 and 3.

Revelation 2:1-4 "These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden candle lampstands: "I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and you have found them liars [You can see this was a pretty solid congregation.]; and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary. Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love."

Remember, Revelation was written about 95 AD and the apostle Paul has been dead now about 30 years, roughly from this time to 95 AD, and things have gone down somewhat in the Ephesian church. There still, when the apostle Paul was there, was a large and vigorous congregation. It became a model of works and labor, patience, and not being able to bear those who are evil.

Revelation 2:5 "Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works."

Go back to what you did at first when the apostle Paul was there, at least during that period of time, and of course later on as well. They did not just go downhill immediately after the apostle Paul left.

Revelation 2:6-7 "But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God."

Back to Acts 19. Ephesus was, and is even today, situated at the southwest end of what the Romans called Asia, the province of Asia, but today it is

Turkey. Very early in its history, roughly about 500 to 400 BC, it was nothing more than an insignificant village of secondary importance to Miletus. Miletus is only about 30 miles to the south of Ephesus. However, through the centuries, Miletus' harbor silted up and then the importance of Ephesus began to rise because Ephesus had a very fine harbor. Now along about 400 or so, the Persians came by and they sealed the doom of Miletus, and they began to build up the city of Ephesus. When Alexander the Great conquered the Persian Empire, he began at Ephesus. That is where he made his first invasion. And so his drive to the east began from that city. From that time on, Ephesus became a city that was Greek in character because, by and large for quite a period of time, any supplies that were coming from Greece and Macedonia came through that area and so there were large numbers of Greeks there loading and unloading ships and moving supplies to Alexander and his army and so it became a city that was Greek in character.

After Alexander's death in 323, there was a period of about 20 years where his generals fought for supremacy. If any of you ever saw the movie, *Alexander the Great* with Richard Burton in it, at the end of the movie, he is laying on this slab, and he is about ready to die and just about ready to expire. All of his generals run up and say, "Who do you leave the kingdom to? Who's going to be the emperor?" And so in the movie, the way they portrayed it is, his dying words were, "To the man who's the strongest." Scene fades. Richard Burton is dead.

So there was about a two-year struggle amongst the generals and eventually it became divided into four areas. Apparently, according to the historians, the man who took over the area of what is today Turkey was the best of the lot, the most noble one, the one who was, let us say, most oriented to democratic ideals and whatever. Now the Bible does not concentrate on that person because it concentrates on the king of the north and the king of the south, who became important in the area of prophecy. To the north were the Seleucids and to the south were the Ptolemies. But it does not record anything. I think it was it Cassander who took over the area of what is today Turkey.

Now they made Pergamum to be their capital city. That turns up too in Revelation the 2nd chapter. We may as well go back there to just pick up a piece of information. Pergamum was not all that far away from Ephesus,

maybe about 50 miles at the very most. In verse 12 of Revelation 2, "To the angel of the church in Pergamos write. . ."

Revelation 2:13 "I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even the days in which Antipas, My faithful martyr, who was killed among you where Satan dwells."

That was the Greek's capital city during that period of time, which was not all that far away from Ephesus.

So during that period of time, Ephesus was ruled by Greeks from Pergamum. This lasted until 133, when Attalus III died. He was the last of those kings. And he willed, upon his death, the city of Ephesus to Rome, which was probably a stroke of genius because it spared the city. Attalus could see the handwriting on the wall, but there was no way that they were going to be able to resist the Romans and he spared the city an attack and maybe a sacking and burning just by simply willing it over to them.

Well, Rome immediately made Ephesus the capital city of the province of Asia. They took it away from Pergamos and they put it in Ephesus. And now Ephesus relied upon two things for its wealth and vitality. The first was its harbor. Now this made it a trading center because it linked the Greco-Macedonian area of the world with everything that was to the east. That means over into Babylon, Israel, and for anyone who wanted to go by land, it meant Egypt as well.

However, rapacious men—it always happens—over-lumbered the area and they overgrazed the area and erosion washed the dirt into the harbor, and the harbor silted up. It is a common problem but they were doing it back then as well. The topsoil slipped into the streams, the streams turned into marshes, and the rainwaters rushed that silt into the harbor, and they clogged Ephesus' harbor too. So now we have got Miletus and Ephesus, both of them clogged. Now, there were many attempts to try to de-silt the harbor, but every one failed.

But by Paul's day, see, now we are getting up to 53 AD, Ephesus' heyday was passed because of the clogged harbor. Some of you will probably be

going over there on the cruise ship, and you are going to be going to Ephesus, and what was formerly the harbor is now seven miles from the ocean. So when you go there, you are going to be quite a bit inland, but you are going to see the remains of buildings that were practically on the shore in the days of the apostle Paul. But today, because of the continuous silting from the erosion of soil, it is now seven miles inland.

The second thing that gave Ephesus vitality was the worship of the multi-breasted goddess, Artemis. Now, that is the eastern equivalent of the Latin, Diana. The multi-breasted approach was two things at the same time. It indicated fertility and also attached to that providence, that is, able to provide. Seems like a strange way of signifying it, but that is the way they decided to do it. That Diana was able to succor, she was able to provide. So it indicated fertility and abundance.

How Diana became associated with Ephesus, nobody knows. There is a legend that her statue fell out of the sky and there it was, it just showed up in the city and nobody knows when it happened. It just showed up there. I do not know whether you have ever seen a picture of it, it is ugly! There is not a bit of grace and beauty about this statue of Diana. There is nothing that anybody, that I can see in their right mind, would find appealing about it. But nonetheless King Croesus (you probably heard of him) was taken by it, and he was the first one to build a temple to her.

Well, that lasted for a while but it was rebuilt around 350 BC. And when they rebuild it, they really did a job this time, and again, you people who will be going there, you will probably see the remnants of it. It is four times larger than the Parthenon. It is very large. It is 425 feet long, which is a football field plus another 40 yards. That is a football field and a half long. That is a pretty good size. It is 220 feet wide, which again is another football field wide plus about another half of a football field wide and it is about 60 feet high. It has 127 marble pillars and 36 of them were inlaid with gold. It is quite an achievement, and it is recognized as one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Quite a building feat.

With the decline of the harbor, the temple of Diana became the main reason for Ephesus existing, because it became nothing more than a tourist center. People coming from all over the world to look at the temple and this ugly

statue of Diana that was in the midst of it. And of course, you know what happens in that kind of a situation. Anytime you have a tourist trap, you are going to have vendors. I am sure that they had people walking around the perimeter of the temple yelling, "Get your hot roasted peanuts here!" or whatever they were selling. It was similar to that, because we know from the Acts the 19th chapter that they were selling statuettes of Diana, statues undoubtedly or carvings or whatever of the temple. And they probably had pennants and balloons and all kinds of things like that. I do not mean exactly those things, but very similar, at least similar in principle. And so, the temple of Diana was nothing more than a big tourist trap. And when Christianity came on the scene, and it began to become successful enough, some of these people began to feel that their livelihood was being taken away because people were turning away from idols. And they reacted and that becomes a big part of the story in Acts the 19th chapter.

Let us go back to verse 2 then.

Acts 19:2-3 . . . Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples, he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." And he said to them, "Into what then were you baptized?" So they said, "Into John's baptism."

Now we are looking at something that probably took a little while to unfold. It is not like it took all of two minutes for Paul to uncover the origin, I guess you might say, of the roots of these disciples. But rather in the group of people that were beginning to form around him as a result of his preaching, he began to notice these people had some unusual ideas or characteristics, and so he decided then to chase it out and because, apparently, from his point of view, these people were already disciples. And I think that this is written from his point of view, as though he is looking at them and they are in this group of people and they are passing themselves off as disciples of Jesus Christ.

But when he began to look more closely because maybe some of their strangeness attracted him, and I do not know what kind of strangeness it would be, maybe some of the things that he heard them say, what they were

doing, or whatever, he then asked them if they received the Holy Spirit. Now he would ask them that, I am sure, because he could not reconcile either what they looked like or what they were doing as being the behavior of someone who had the Holy Spirit. And so his first question then had to do about the Holy Spirit. And then it came out, and they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit."

Now he knew for sure that these were people that had a defect, a spiritual defect that needed to be rectified. And so then the next question is, "Into what were you baptized?" Well, it turned out to be John's baptism. Now does this cast aspersions on the apostle John?

Let us look at the time element first. This is 53 AD. How long was John dead? Well, John was dead from the very beginning of Jesus' ministry. That was 27 AD. And here we have something [*dead air] or their lack of understanding about the Holy Spirit. Now, the reason I can say that is because it says very clearly in Matthew the 3rd chapter that the One who was coming after him would baptize people with the Holy Spirit. That is what John the Baptist said. He knew that the Holy Spirit was going to be given. So these people who were passing themselves off as disciples of Jesus Christ undoubtedly had some understanding about Christ, but they did not have very complete understanding about Christ. They had not been, in all likelihood, directly instructed by John the Baptist, but rather maybe by some of John the Baptist's disciples. And so over the period of years, some of the knowledge that John the Baptist had and passed on to his disciples did not get passed on to these people, and so their understanding was defective.

Acts 19:4-7 Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Jesus Christ." And when they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. Now the men were all about twelve in all.

What he did here, Paul preached to them, I think, in much the same way that he would have any other Jew. And that is, a Jew who had been baptized by John the Baptist or baptized into that organization that succeeded him, and

that is that Jesus is the Christ and that John's ministry pointed to something beyond him that was greater and that greater was Christ Jesus. And so they believed him. There was enough there and they were convicted enough, God was calling them, and so they went on then and were baptized and Paul laid hands on them. And the confirmation that Paul had made the right decision came with the giving of the Holy Spirit and the speaking with the tongues and prophesying.

Now a couple of things to consider. The first one is a little one. Maybe it is just a technicality. Would you say that these people were baptized for the first time or rebaptized? Just a technicality. The apostle Paul might look at it as though the first time was not even a baptism. All they did was get wet. They were immersed. But they were not baptized into Christ Jesus. And he might look at it as this really being their first baptism. OK, that is a possibility. No big deal, just something to think about. Of more importance is that the baptism was invalid because it had a defect. The defect was not in the fact that they were immersed, but the defect was in the minds and the hearts, the understanding of the people who had been baptized in to John's baptism.

What does this mean to the ministry in a practical way? I am sure that God included this in the book so that there would be some guidance regarding baptisms that people have gone through in other faiths. It is not questioning sincerity at all. And in this case, it is not even questioning method because John baptized in the same way that Jesus baptized, in the same way that the church of God baptized, as these people were completely immersed, and it had to be that way because baptism pictures a burial. So if a person is baptized in this modern age by just having some water sprinkled on him, that is not fulfilling the symbolism that Christ clearly taught His church. That it has to be by immersion because of the symbolism of burial. This person, then, buries his life in Christ, gives it completely and totally, as the apostle Paul says, that he died. And when someone dies, they are buried, and the person is buried, not with a clump of dirt on his forehead, he is completely covered over.

Even as great of a name as John the Baptist was not sufficient. What was more important, what was in the mind, the understanding, the repentance, and the belief system of those who were baptized. And in this case, their

belief system was wrong and the baptism was faulty because they had not been baptized into the name of Jesus Christ. They had two strikes against them. And so Paul, apparently it was the first time that he was ever confronted with that, he had to, let us say, reason it out, guided by God's Spirit, to see whether he should put these people under the water again. And he decided to do it on the basis of those things: their faulty understanding and the fact that they had not been baptized into the name of Jesus Christ. And when he did it and laid hands on them, immediately God gave the signs in order to affirm to Paul that he had made the right decision. So that is there now for all time for us to be able to see and make some kind of a judgment on the basis of Scripture, those people that we come in contact with who have been baptized by someone else.

Now, I think a very good illustration of this in this age of God's church was Mr. Herbert Armstrong. He was not baptized by a church of God minister. He was baptized by a Baptist minister. You probably, if you have read his autobiography, he made that very clear that he was baptized by a Baptist minister. And the way it worked out was that back there in 1926 or so, whenever he was being converted, he had come to the understanding that he needed to be baptized. He saw that it had to be immersion in water. He also began to see that it had to be done in the name of Jesus Christ and into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

So putting all these things together, he began going to ministers and asking them if they would baptize him the way that he wanted to be baptized and to say over him the words that he wanted to have said. And the only one he could find to do it was a Baptist. And even that man had to get permission from his superiors, a council of bishops or something. And they gave their permission and so then the Baptist minister baptized him. So it was done though, in this case, exactly according to the formula that is given in the Bible, and I think it is obvious that God recognized it. Regardless of the person who put him in the water, it was done with Mr. Armstrong having understanding in the blood of Jesus Christ and that he was committing his life to God. And the baptism symbolized the burial of himself and that he was no longer in that sense going to exist, that he died and was buried and then resurrected up out of the water the newness of life. And so I think it is obvious that that occurred.

Acts 19:8 And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God.

This mention of the kingdom of God is rather interesting because most of the time in relation to the apostle Paul, it says that he preached Christ, where he preached Christ crucified, where he preached Jesus and the cross, or Christ and His resurrection. And in this case it says persuading them concerning the things of the kingdom of God. Now it is very interesting that a couple of the commentaries that I looked in said that this was probably the title of the whole message that Paul preached, and the others were just aspects of it. I think that is interesting insight.

Acts 19:9-10 But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way [that is interesting, "spoke evil of *the* Way"] before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

This school of Tyrannus, do you know what that word means? Tyrannus: tyrant. What parent would lay that name on their kid? Hey Tyrant, come here! Well, if that was his given name, that is kind of interesting. But one wonders if maybe it was not the name that the students attached to him. Yeah, it was a school that he was [?], and our schoolmaster is a tyrant. And it became proverbial all over the place and it just stuck that that is what it was. Well, anyway, Paul used the school. Now there is no mention of him paying for it and that leads one to wonder about Tyrannus again. Was Tyrannus converted during the apostle Paul's stay there? That is a possibility. If he was not converted, was he, out of the generosity of his heart, giving the apostle Paul use of the school at times whenever Tyrannus was not using it? Incidentally, that is a possibility.

The reason it is a possibility is because they took a long siesta during the day, from, according to some sources, 11 a.m. until 4 p.m. Well, at 4 p.m. I would be ready for supper or something, and I would not want to go back to work. They must have begun early in the day. I mean, they must have begun work at sunrise or somewhere awfully close to it. You could not get any

work done. I mean, I could not unless they worked from 6 in the morning till 11 and then maybe went back to work at 4 in the afternoon and worked until 7, something like that, or maybe worked until sunset.

But at any rate, that is what the commentaries say. That there are indications that the schools normally let out at 11:00 in the morning and then they regathered again about 4:00 in the afternoon. And apparently the apostle Paul, if that was the case, was using that school during periods of time in which it was not in operation. So it was not being used anyway, so if Tyrannus just let it out to him at a very reasonable rate, or maybe freely, it is possible that he could have even done that.

Now that leads us to another conjecture. What did the apostle Paul do while he was in Ephesus? Did he go about his normal routine of working as a tent maker in a leather shop or something? Well, that is a possibility, but if he did, boy, that man had a long day. That meant getting up with the sun, going to work, leaving work at 11 in the morning, running over to the school of the tyrant, sitting there for a while teaching people, holding some kind of an evangelistic service in the middle of the afternoon, which seems unusual, but if they were off work and kind of taking a siesta, there would probably be people milling around and it was really an opportune time to do it. And then 4 o'clock, the students come back to school, the apostle Paul leaves. Now what does he do? Does he go visiting in the evening, holding Bible study somewhere? Does he go back to the leather shop and work for a few hours? I do not know, but the man had a jam-packed day. Boy, it was a labor of love with him to be doing what he was doing here.

Turn with me back to II Corinthians 2, verse 1. Now it was during this period of time that Paul wrote I Corinthians. Apparently the major problem was opposition to his authority. We find here,

II Corinthians 2:1 But I determined this within myself, that I would not come to you again in sorrow.

Again, that word indicates that during this period of time in Ephesus, he not only wrote the letter, but he also made a trip across the Aegean Sea into Achaia and into Corinth.

II Corinthians 10:1 Now I, Paul, myself am pleading with you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—who in presence am lowly among you, but being absent am bold toward you.

What this indicates is that he was not too successful when he made his visit. You see, they then began to make a mockery of him and said that, well, when he is here, he is not very imposing, and he talks gently and softly, you see, but when he writes those letters, boy, they are really stinging. And so they were getting the idea from that, that Paul had no strength or power to him at all. And while he was away from them, he could write strong letters because he was not there to get punched in the nose. But at any rate, he had all kinds of problems.

I think there is another reference in II Corinthians 13.

II Corinthians 13:1 This will be the third time I am coming to you, and by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established.

You begin to get the picture. Though things were going great guns in Ephesus, things were not going great guns in Corinth. And so Paul made a trip or two back to Corinth, at least one and maybe two. See, when he says three witnesses, he means the first time he was there and preached the gospel to them, the second time that is mentioned there in II Corinthians, that he went back there, and now here in II Corinthians 13, he is warning them of the third time that he is going to come. That all fits right in that period of time that is covered by verse 10 in Acts 19, "and this continued for two years."

Acts 19:11 Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul.

I thought any miracle would be unusual. But these were *unusual* miracles. I mean, these were miracles of an extraordinary kind. They were noteworthy enough that Luke emphasized it by adding an extra word. They were not just

miracles, they were *extraordinary*. They were unusual even for these people. Now he is going to tell us what kind. It was through the hands of Paul, which would indicate the laying on of hands, people being being healed in that.

Acts 19:12 . . . so that even handkerchiefs and aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and evil spirits went out of them.

Now these handkerchiefs is kind of a euphemism. Because what it literally says in the Greek are sweat cloths. You know the things that he wiped his brow with while he was working. Now, I do not know whether they cleaned them up or not. I hope they did, but it can also indicate work aprons. But at any rate, there were evidently things that were taken from Paul and I will assume that they were cleaned up and then they were torn into pieces, and these things were sent to people because the apostle Paul could not go to either anoint them directly or whatever.

It is from this scripture that the anointed clothes arise. That is where it has its basis. This was done as an act of faith or a response to faith by people who understood that the minister did not even actually have to be there and the cloth more or less represented the minister and the minister had done nothing more than lay his hands on the cloth and anointed it with oil before sending it out.

Now comes an amusing incident here in verse 13.

Acts 19:13-16 Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits saying, "We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches." Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?" And then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of the house naked and wounded.

And the spirit did not even come out! *They* went out of the house.

Well, this kind of thing was, in a way, something that would be very likely to happen in a place like Ephesus. I mean, anybody who will go loony over a multi-breasted ugly statue has got to have some kind of mental health problems. And they believed a great deal in superstition, and itinerant exorcists were something that were very common. Now their means of exercising a demon was to pronounce the magic name and the magic name usually was another demon who was stronger than the demon who was already occupying the person. And so if you could call upon a stronger demon, he would come and he would chase the weaker demon out of the person that he inhabited. So, the formula called for the exorcist to start giving the names of all of the demons that he knew, hoping that somewhere along the line he would hit the one who happened to be there to hear him to drive the demon out of the inhabitant there.

Now they saw the apostle Paul casting out demons by the name of Jesus Christ, and every time he did it, the demon came out. That was a powerful name. Aha! If he can do it, it must be the name. It is not the faith of the man who is doing it. It is not the response of the God in heaven that is doing it. It is the name. And so they had no faith in that name. It was just a name, to them. It was a name that had magical properties, to them. And the demon pulled a dirty trick on them, see. It is really kind of funny. "Jesus I know, Paul I know, but who are you? I'll listen to them, but. . ."

Acts 19:18-20 And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totaled fifty thousand pieces of silver. [This is the equivalent of one day's wage for 50,000 people.] So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.

So even though there was a certain amount of opposition, as always, the work was prospering there.

Acts 19:21 When these things were accomplished, Paul purposed in the Spirit, that when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome."

This begins Paul's very circuitous route into Jerusalem. Now if you can picture where Ephesus is, southwest corner of Turkey, he is going to go up into Macedonia and Achaia, which means he is going to go west across the Aegean Sea, go to Achaia, which is the southern peninsula of Greece, and then from there, that is, in Corinth, he is going to go north and go to the churches in Macedonia, which includes the one in Thessalonica as well as the one in Philippi and perhaps also there is one in Berea as well. And then from there you see he is going to go back through Asia, which is western Turkey, and then on to Jerusalem. That is an awful lot of walking, riding horse, donkey, sailing, or whatever. It is going to cover a great deal of distance and it is going to take him a little bit of time. Actually this trip is going to occupy about one-third of the book.

Also we are entering into very clearly another "we" section. So Luke is with him and he is writing here as an eyewitness, and he is not drawing upon other sources at this at this time.

Now this period here begins in 56 AD and it will not end until about 62 AD. Also I just want to draw your attention in verse 21 to the word "must." "I must also see Rome." Now it does not mean there that he is going to see it as a tourist, but he meant in regard to seeing the brethren there. Remember there was already a church there when he got there. One had already been established by some unknown person. But he felt impelled for some reason to get to Rome.

Acts 19:22-23 So he sent into Macedonia two of those who ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus, but he himself stayed in Asia for a time. And about that time there arose a great commotion about the Way.

Timothy (I am going to go back here to verse 22) rejoined Paul in Corinth. You can find that in chapter 18 and verse 5. And he was with Paul part of the time in Ephesus. Now Paul then sent him over into Corinth again. You can find this from I Corinthians 4:17 and chapter 16, verses 10 and 11. So it seems as though Timothy might have been pastoring the church. He might have been though more likely Paul's representative, like a liaison between the church at Corinth and Paul because of the trouble that was going on

there. Timothy was going back and forth and trying to help get these things reconciled so that the church could be united and go on toward the Kingdom of God.

Acts 19:24-27 [The beginning of the riot.] A certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Diana, brought no small profit to the craftsmen. [Here come the vendors.] He called them together with the workers of similar occupation, and said, "Men, you know that we have our prosperity by this trade. [not only did they have their prosperity, but a lot of the city had their prosperity as a result of the tourist trade there, going to to see the temple] Moreover you see and hear that not only in 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. 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."

Now you can see the motivation is money. See, the protection of their self-interest. Apparently the church was having enough of an impact on people's lives that even though the city was not being converted, the city was seriously questioning whether or not there really was an Artemis, whether there was a Diana, whether this was really an occupation that was worthy of such a great city as Ephesus. So apparently these people were beginning to feel somewhat of a pinch. These people turned away 50,000 pieces of silver in terms of books and whatever. That sounds to me like that was a reasonable impact and that it would have some kind of effect on the business.

Acts 19:28 When they heard this, they were full of wrath and cried out, saying, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" The whole city was filled with confusion, and rushed into the theater with one accord.

From what I have been able to find with my references, this theater was no small building. It was an amphitheater capable of holding 24,000 people seated. That is a pretty good-sized stadium. So they rushed into the theater, which was apparently the place that the city council normally met at designated times. They would get up on the stage, hold their council

meetings. Apparently the acoustics were such that the people speaking on stage during the council meetings as these things were being discussed, . . . Please remember it was a Greek city. It was democratically ruled and had a governmental structure very similar to what we have here in the United States. The people were invited to the council meetings and they could sit in on them and listen to what was going on.

Well, the place was not being used for a council meeting, that is, the theater. It was empty at this time. And so all these people were herded in there and they were going to have a great big union rally. That is what it amounted to.

Acts 19:29-33 So the whole city was filled with confusion, and rushed into the theater with one accord, having seen Gaius, who was a Christian, and Aristarchus, Macedonians, Paul's travel companions. And when Paul wanted to go into the people, the disciples would not allow him. [That is, the natives of Ephesus who had been converted. They felt that the unruly mob might do bodily harm to him.] Then some of the officials of Asia, who were his friends, sent to him pleading that he would not venture into the theater. [Some of the town council, I guess.] 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. [Mob psychology. Gaper's blocks. We have a gridlock here at the theater and people are there screaming and jumping up and down and nobody knows what is going on.] And so they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward.

Why the Jews? Well, I would have to say that they were going to take advantage of this situation, this riot, and they were going to use it against the apostle Paul. It was not their riot at all, somebody else ordered this one up. But they were going to take advantage of it.

Acts 19:33-34 And Alexander motioned with his hands, and wanted to make his defense to the people. But when they found out that he was a Jew, all with one voice cried out for two hours, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"

There is some prejudice there undoubtedly. Just like the Greeks up there in Corinth. When they found out that Gallio had chased the Jews from the judgment seat, they took advantage of that situation and beat the tar out of Sosthenes. Always waiting for the opportunity to jump on the Jews. You can understand the Jews were jumpy. And then besides that kind of treatment, here is the Christians coming in and tell them that they are all wrong about their religion.

Acts 19:35 So 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?"

See there it is. It is mentioned right there that that was the legend. That this ugly statue fell out of the sky. Oh, I forgot to tell you something. Guess what they used the temple for in Ephesus? It was the city bank. That is where they kept their money. You know what the rationale was? The rationale was that nobody would dare steal anything out of a holy place. That probably worked. There was so much superstition regarding this thing, that the temple of Diana became the bank, which gives you extra insight into maybe why Demetrius, the silversmith here, maybe he had some money in the bank. According to a little bit of reading that I have done, the banking system began in Babylon and it was started by the priests, by the church, the priests there.

Acts 19:36-40 "Therefore, since these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rashly. For you have brought these men here who are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of your goddess. 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. [Sounds like a pretty fair-headed guy here.] But if you have any other inquiry to make, it shall be determined in the lawful assembly. For we are in danger of being called in question for today's uproar."

That was very true because the Romans reacted when there were riots. Normally if everything was going along smoothly, they allowed the natives of the area to rule over their own city. Maybe there would be a proconsul

there who would be over it all, or like a procurator like Pilate was there in the area of Palestine, but otherwise they were allowed to rule themselves. But if there was a riot broke out, then in came the Roman legions and usually it turned into a very bloody affair. And so here is this city clerk, who is the highest ranking Greek official here, and he says, look, you are in danger of making the Romans react.

Acts 19:40-41 "For we are in danger of being called and questioned for today's uproar, there being no reason which we may give to account for this disorderly gathering." And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly.

I mentioned to you when we gave the background, that it seems as though one of the major reasons why Luke recorded some of these things, many things that he undoubtedly could have put in, but it further emphasizes Luke's proposition that duly constituted governments permitted the church to operate at least as freely as Judaism. That it was not viewed as an illegal religion. But rather it was, in every case that we have seen so far, nobody has made a trendsetting decision against them.