

THE BOOK OF ACTS

ACTS 19:21-40 | LESSON SUMMARY

Riot in Ephesus

ACTS 19:21, "Now after these events Paul resolved in the Spirit to pass through Macedonia and Achaia and go to Jerusalem, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome." (ESV)

- Helping the church in Jerusalem
 - Romans 15:25-31
 - 1 Corinthians 16:1-4
- "I must see Rome"
 - Paul's passion for this community is also referenced in Romans 1:8-15

ACTS 19:22-23, "And having sent into Macedonia two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while. About that time there arose no little disturbance concerning the Way."

- You may recall Timothy from Paul's second mission trip (chapter 16)
 - Jewish mother, Gentile father
- Both Timothy and Erastus leave for Macedonia, so they are not with Paul when the "disturbance" happens
 - This disturbance is provoked by Demeterius
 - Prominent silversmith
 - Makes shrines to Artemis and is angry because these Christians have had a negative impact on his business



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Artemis

- Disturbance = Riot
- ACTS 19:27**, "And there is danger not only that this trade of ours may come into disrepute but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis may be counted as nothing, and that she may even be deposed from her magnificence, she whom all Asia and the world worship." (ESV)
- Artemis = Guardian Deity of Ephesus
 - Ancient goddess
 - Fertility, childbirth, and even of the dead
 - Her temple was so expansive, it is considered one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, and served as the banking center of Asia
 - The origins of Artemis date back to a meteorite that was carved into the image of a half-mummy, half-breast-covered woman
 - Demeterius appeals to not only their financial self-interest, but also the pride that the community took in the great temple of Artemis
 - Paul wasn't campaigning against the goddess, he was simply teaching the gospel, and it happened to cause people to lose interest in the cult



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- Mob drags Gaius and Aristarchus into the theater (19:29)
- Paul wants to go, but the disciples and the Asiarchs (officers) urge him not to
 - Chaos: most don't even know why they're gathered on the brink of a riot

ACTS 19:34, "But when they recognized that he was a Jew, for about two hours they all cried out with one voice, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

- Alexander attempts to settle crowd, but instead they begin to chant
- The city clerk gets involved
 - Cautions the Ephesians either bring charges or leave. Otherwise, charges will be brought.
 - "For we really are in danger of being charged with rioting today, since there is no cause that we can give to justify this commotion." (Acts 19:40, ESV)
 - City clerk points out that Paul and the Christians have not blasphemed or acted in any way sacrilegious.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: Zondervan, Holman Bible Atlas, Acts: Archeological Study Bible

