

July 3, 2022

## “Brought Near By the Blood of Christ”

Acts 19:21-41

### Prel Rmks

Paul’s ministry in Ephesus ...

LOGW ... Ephesians

**(21)** When these things were accomplished, Paul purposed in the Spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome." **(22)** So he sent into Macedonia two of those who ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus, but he himself stayed in Asia for a time.

### INTRODUCTION

The Lord had done great things through Paul and his missionary team in Ephesus.

But the Lord was beginning to stir the heart of Paul and give him a holy sense of **restlessness**, prompting him that maybe it was time to move on.

**Romans 15:20** And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation, {**furtherance** of the Gospel Phil 1}

In our text today, we get additional insight into the **spiritual darkness** that **permeated the culture and social order** in Ephesus, and we see how God providentially began to bring Paul’s time there to a close.

## I. The Mission Accomplished in Ephesus

vv. 21-22

### (21)

When **these things** were **accomplished**, = completed, ended, brought to a conclusion.

What things? 6

1. Paul taught for 2 years in Ephesus – “all who dwelt in Asia (Roman province) heard the Word of the LJ”
2. God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul – v. 11
3. Exorcists like the seven Sons of Sceva tried to use the name of Jesus to cast out evil spirits, but they failed – vv. 13-16
4. Fear fell on all who heard about it, and “the name of Jesus was magnified” v. 17
5. Lives were genuinely changed ... real repentance – vv. 18-19
6. “The Word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed” – v. 20 = had power and force; overpowered the darkness that was there in that city and region

Luke speaks about the Word of God throughout the book of Acts in this way, as if it is something alive and growing. And, of course, we know the WofG is alive spiritually! And Luke speaks about it in this way to describe the furtherance of the Gospel and the advance and the growth of the Christian faith.

**Acts 6:7** Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.

**Acts 12:24** But the word of God grew and multiplied.

**Acts 13:48** Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.

**Acts 13:49** And the word of the Lord was being spread throughout all the region.

[Ephesus – “the Word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed” = it went forward with great power and force and penetrated the darkness everywhere it was spread]

[So, it had been a very successful 3 years ...]

**(21)**

Paul **purposed in the Spirit**, when he had passed through **Macedonia and Achaia**, to go to **Jerusalem**, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see **Rome**."

- A **plan** was beginning to **formulate in Paul's heart**
- He was still in Ephesus, but more and more his mind and heart were beginning to travel on
- This was all at the prompting of the HS

**(22) Advance Team**

So he sent into Macedonia two of those who ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus, but he himself stayed in Asia for a time.

- Paul had people who ministered to him
- Sent them on ahead to prepare the way for his move
- So, there was no question his time in Ephesus was nearing an end.
- Advance Team – {Gerald Ford Presidential Campaign in 1976}

[The Mission Accomplished in Ephesus]

## II. The Commotion Stirred in Ephesus

vv. 23-34

### (23)

And about that time there **arose** a **great commotion** about **the Way**.

- **the Way** people who believed that Jesus is the Messiah and the only true God!
- **arose** uprising
- **commotion** stirring, disturbance, tumult

### (24) Stirred Up by One Man

For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made **silver shrines** of **Diana**, brought no small profit to the craftsmen.

- **Diana** Artemis
- **silver shrines** temples – replicas of the Temple of Artemis ~ images of Artemis ~ graven images; idols; silver not found ... many terra cotta have been found

**(25)** He *Demetrius* 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, *hear the derision in his voice* this Paul has persuaded and turned away many people, saying that they are not gods which are made with hands.

- Great impact of the Gospel and the truth
- Light (truth) always dispels darkness! The greater the light, the greater the darkness is dispelled!

**(27)**

So not only is this trade of ours in danger of falling into disrepute, - "it's not just about us"

but also the temple of the great goddess Artemis may be despised and her magnificence destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worship."

- "It's not just about us and our wealth. We have a much nobler cause – the great goddess, Artemis! We have a righteous reason for opposing this man, Paul."
- Entire lives and the culture and social order was wrapped up in and defined by the worship of Artemis.
  - Ephesus was all about Artemis in the same way Orlando is about Disney of Niagra is about the Falls
  - The temple of Artemis was a tourist attraction
  - Souvenirs ~ no doubt many shops and booths set up in the area surrounding the temple {Alabama game}

- The local economy and the employment of many people depended on the continued popularity of this false goddess
- Civic pride: “Artemis of Ephesians” ~ its what they were known for!
- Rituals and ceremonies and special events marked the social calendar – {May 6<sup>th</sup> parade}
- {Mardi Gras in Mobile} {Watermelons in Grand Bay}

**(28) The Reaction of those who heard Demetrius**

Now when they heard *this*, they were full of wrath and cried out, saying, "Great is **Artemis of the Ephesians!**"

**(29)** 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.

- Probably someone of the Jewish faith
- Wanted to distance themselves from those who were part of the Way ...

**(34)** But when they found out that he was a Jew, all with one voice cried out for about **two hours**, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

[You see the darkness ...]

[But it was darkness penetrated by the light of the truth ...]  
**2 Peter 1:19** And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; ...]

[The whole world was lost in the darkness of sin  
The Light of the World is Jesus]

[The Mission Accomplished in Ephesus]  
The Commotion Stirred in Ephesus]



### III. The Protection Provided in Ephesus vv. 35-41

God, who can turn the heart of a King, used the town clerk to quiet the crowd and quell the riot, and save Paul's traveling companions and perhaps even Paul himself.

**(35)** 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 Artemis, 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.

- So, here the **Howard Sprague of Ephesus** is used by God to preserve the lives and well-being of Paul and his team so they could move on from Ephesus and fulfill God's will
- And there's no doubt this entire episode **confirmed** to Paul that it was **time to move on**
  - God often allows and uses situations and circumstances in our lives to show us His direction in our lives – but **we must be careful** ...
  -

## Conclusion / Applications

1. **We see in our nation the same darkness and alienation from the Only True God that corrupted the entire culture and social order of Ephesus.**
  - Think about all that was associated with the worship of Artemis:
    - Idolatry
    - Occult practices
    - Demonic influence
    - Immorality of every sort
    - [Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!]
  - We see the same darkness and corruption in our nation today!
    - People living lives of immorality and idolatry ...
    - People living lives under the influence of demons ...
    - People living lives in rebellion against their Creator ...
    - Corruption everywhere:
      - o in the government
      - o in the educational system which is run by the government
      - o in the media which is nothing more than the propaganda machine for the anti-God agenda of the God-haters that make up half the country
    - They march in the streets and riot and commit acts of violence to show their disdain for spiritual and moral and Biblical righteousness and anyone who would in any way want to interrupt the godless way they want to live their lives!
    - They claim the moral highground!

- They cry out in their own way, “Great are our gods!”
  - o Great is the god of government
  - o Great is the god of education
  - o Great is the god of materialism
  - o Great is the god of pleasure
  - o Great is the god of absolute license to sin in any way I please!
  
- Our nation is divided nearly in half between those who are shouting, “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians” and those who know there is a Name above every Name.
  - What you have is light colliding with darkness ...
  - Division on every single issue ...
  - Two world views ...
  
- Paul wrote to the Ephesians from Rome

**Ephesians 1:19-21** *Paul spoke about the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power (20) which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, (21) far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.*

- Light dispels darkness!
  - Within 300 years idolatry in the part of the world was virtually wiped out, including the worship of Artemis
  - Today, it is safe to say that no one in the world worships Artemis, but today, and right now even, there are millions, if not billions who are worshipping the LJ even as we are here.

## 2. We see our responsibility

**Philippians 2:14-16** Do all things without complaining and disputing, (15) that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault **in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,** (16) **holding fast the word of life,** so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.

## 3. We see how many in Ephesus were delivered from the darkness and realize it is the same way we were delivered – by the grace of God and the blood of Christ.

### **Ephesians 2:12ff**

**(12)** that **at that time you were without Christ,** being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, **having no hope and without God in the world.** **(13)** **But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.**

**(18)** For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. **(19)** Now, therefore, you are **no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,** **(20)** having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone*

- The only reason we are any different than those who walk in darkness, is because by the grace of God we who were far off, just like the Ephesians, and we who were alienated, just like the Ephesians, and distant from God, just like the Ephesians; we have been brought near by the blood of Christ.