

Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Riots of Ephesus **Acts 19:21-41**

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SermonAudio Blurb: This section of Acts chronicles the closing days of Paul's time in Ephesus. While he is seeing many very encouraging things occur, there is still the constant presence of resistance by those who reject the gospel message. In this passage we see the planning of Paul and the consequences of the gospel affecting the economy of many in Ephesus.

I. Introduction.

- A. Read 19:21-41.
- B. Review:
 - 1. Ephesus, a key part of the 3rd journey.
 - 2. He had left Aquila and Priscilla there when he went on to finish his 2nd journey.
 - 3. This was his center of work to reach Asia, spending three years here teaching and evangelizing.
 - 4. In all of this, he has come face to face with the demonic reality of every false religion and has shown the gospel to be supreme.
 - 5. Vs 20, The Word of the Lord was growing mightily and prevailing.
 - 6. What we have now is the final part of his time in Ephesus before he prepares to move on. And what we will do is simply work our way through the story itself.
- C. The first part of this section is essentially an introduction where we see how Paul charts out the final part of third journey (21-22).
 - 1. This section serves as a explanation for what follows in the rest of the book of Acts. So, you can think of this section as an introduction to chapters 20-28.
 - 2. Go to Macedonia, Achaia, then Jerusalem, and finally, Rome. (21)
 - 3. **Macedonia** is where Philippi and Thessalonica are at. **Achaia** is where Greece is, so it would include Athens and Corinth.

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- a. Why would he go this way? It is simply to strengthen and help the churches he planted in those areas.
- b. In Ephesians 4 Paul talks about the presence of the Apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastor-teachers who are given to the church so that it might mature.
- c. They are growing and adding to their numbers. They may be starting new churches in the surrounding areas and they would benefit from him coming to give counsel and help.
- 4. What about Jerusalem? What would be the purpose for this? 1 Corinthians 16:1-5 and 2 Corinthians 8-9.
- 5. Paul has been very busy while in Ephesus. Not merely dealing with everything there. He also wrote 1 Corinthians at this point in time. Later, in Macedonia he writes 2 Corinthians.
- 6. Prior to leaving Ephesus we find Paul sending Timothy and Erastus ahead. (22).
- D. Now, Luke brings us back to Ephesus to see the one last series of events involving the church that Paul helped establish. This section is less about Paul and more about the church itself.

II. The Gospel confronts Satan.

- A. The Complaint of Demetrius (22-27).
 - 1. The Way creates a disturbance (23). This is the common designation for the Church or the Christian faith at that time.
 - 2. Demetrius creates problems for the Way due to loss of revenue.
 - a. A silversmith who employed many craftsmen. We find that he was mad at Paul for saying that their works were not gods (26).
 - b. He appealed to these craftsmen and it is worth noting the nature of his complaint: vs 27 where he makes a two-fold argument.

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3. At the same time, it is worth noting that Paul's message has been very consistent while in these cities preaching and teaching about Jesus Christ.

B. The rage of the crowds (28-34.

1. The crowds were filled with rage (*thumos*).
 - a. This is the kind of anger that overwhelms you.
 - b. When used of God, it refers to that wrath that shall sweep all who reject Jesus, all who do not love and follow Him, into eternal death.
2. Demetrius works the crowd.
3. They grab the closest people they can who are connected to Paul and take them to the theater, which could hold 24,000 people. This is the place not only of plays but social and political gatherings.

C. Paul wants to go (30-31) to his companions and those around him prevent this.

D. We see in vss 32-34 that no one really knew what was happening so they end up deciding a Jew named Alexander was to blame.

1. Here we see again the nature of a riot. Few know what actually is going on. There is energy and emotion that is flowing and it takes on its own life. Any of you who were here for the Kenosha riots watched it in living color. Many of you experienced it on the streets as law enforcement.
2. Now he is not even a Christian, merely a man that some of them had seen with Paul. Likely this was because Paul was a known Jew and was always around both the synagogue and the School of Tyrannus which was next to the synagogue.

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3. And that puts everyone back over the top because they did not like the fact that he was a Jew.
- E. Sanity of Logic and Law (35-41).
 1. The town clerk would be something like our mayor. He is not just some guy working behind a counter filling in forms and handing out maps.
 2. When he talks the people may be out of control, but not so out of control that they have completely lost their senses. His words bring sanity to an otherwise insane situation.
 3. The reason for this is he also would have the authority to bring into the city guards and they would not handle things like we would expect here in our current day.
 4. So when this guy began to speak, the people started to calm down. Which was his first goal, he simply has to calm everyone down.
 5. Next, he gives them a basic statement of logic in vs 36:
 - a. Ephesus is the guardian of the temple of Artemis. And, the fact is that in that temple is the artifact that came from heaven.
 - b. And since the goddess is still there and since the temple is still standing it means that they have not failed in their guardianship.
 6. Therefore, (36) don't do anything foolish or rash and calm down.
 7. Then he brings the law into play. The people may not like what is happening, but these people of the Way have not broken laws. They are not robbing the temples or blaspheming.
 8. Therefore, if anyone is really bothered then let them go to the courts and deal with this legally and make the formal charges.
 9. And if there is anything else you want, make sure you do it via a lawful way and not through rioting, which everyone there is on the cusp of being rightly accused of doing.
 10. This brought everything to a close and he sent everyone home.

III. Conclusion.

- A. The presence of the gospel and the church will bring pressure on the community.
 1. This is not the first time people got angry or violent in the life of Paul or the other men and women of the early church.

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2. And none of the historical records shows that the Christians were trying to overthrow or tear down things. They were not seeking to become a Christian nation.
 3. They were simply changed from the inside out and everything became very different for them. And this has a ripple effect upon the culture.
 4. I often hear people say they are praying for a new revival for our nation. But I am not sure that they realize what that would mean for the country and their own private lives.
 - a. Don't get me wrong, it would be wonderful to see the gospel explode in the lives of people throughout this land.
 - b. But it would affect so much of our lives, from welfare, entertainment, clothing, education, the health and mental health industry, the military complex, education, family and marriage, sexual norms, the legal world, prison and punishment systems, economic standards and systems, and so on.
 - c. This nation would be turned upside down, and that would include most in the church.
 5. But I also think that we use the fact that there is not a revival to excuse ourselves from being an impact on our society. But the gospel should affect us in such a way that we live quite differently from the rest of the world.
 - a. We speak the truth in a world of lies.
 - b. We live in purity in a world of impurity.
 - c. We worship God alone in a world of pluralism.
 - d. And we make the spread of the gospel our primary purpose in what we do.
 6. We ought not seek to anger people. But we should not be surprised when they do.
- B. The fall of Ephesus.
1. Such a key city that was responsible for so much good, gospel work in the early years.
 2. In chapter 20 Paul leaves the city and challenges the elders to be on guard for savage wolves shall come and seek to devour. This would have been around A.D. 56.

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3. By A.D. 66 he had to send Timothy back there to help try to fix the church. Full of trouble-makers, false teachers, unqualified elders and such.
4. By A.D. 95 the Apostle John writes Revelation and mentions the church in Ephesus again. This time warning that they were in danger of being destroyed, not by man but God. They had left their first love.
5. That place is now merely ruins and the whole area is under Muslim control.
6. We cannot look back on our good efforts and think we can relax. We must fight and press forward and stand fast upon sound doctrine and the sufficiency of the gospel and the Word of God each and every day.

Benediction

May the God of peace Himself make you holy through and through. May your body, soul and spirit be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the One who calls you to Himself is faithful and He will accomplish it. Amen