

Paul in the Lions' Den

Acts 19:21f

Introduction

Paul has established a firm foothold for the gospel from *Antioch* through *Galatia* to the *Aegean Sea*

- On the western bank – Macedon
- On the eastern bank – Asia

After almost three years in Ephesus, Paul begins to make plans.

- v.21
1. To *revisit* Macedon and Greece.
 2. Then to *Jerusalem* with a love offering.
 3. Then to see *Rome* and consolidate the truth.
 4. Then *Spain*. A missionary vision where Christ is not.

He sends his men

v.22 to prepare his coming... and prepare a gift for Jerusalem
And also to visit Corinth.

Paul doesn't *just dream*, he plans!
Sounds noble! Certainly there could be no obstacles! But...

v.23 The city of Ephesus after three years revolted against Paul and Christianity.

Paul has not just exposed the synagogue and magic but also idolatry; ... the queen mother goddess Artemis.

Artemis was a pre-Greek name from an earlier culture.

She was the mother goddess of fertility and wild creatures. The Ephesian rendition of Artemis has assimilated the earlier features

The Romans called her "Diana" goddess of the hunt and the moon.

Her temple was one of the seven wonders... four times larger than the Parthenon. 127 pillars, each 60ft high; adorned with sculpture, all but one pillar was destroyed located on December 31, 1869.

The silversmiths considered her their patron goddess because they made their living off of making silver niches containing her image purchased by the devoted to offer in worship.

But Paul had brought a serious drop-off in production.

And nothing raises the ire like a jolt to the pocketbook.

So Demetrius... leader of the guild arose.

v.25-27- a mass protest against Paul's subversive propaganda.

He challenged:

- Polytheism.
- Idolatry.
- Their livelihood.
- Artemis position and Ephesus as the "Temple Guardian"

She was worshipped in 33 places.

Such an affront was intolerable...

v.29 Their silversmiths' resentment caught fire and spread to all the citizenry.

They all raced to the amphitheater carved into Mt. Pion's western slope that seated 25,000 people

Assemblies were held three times a month.

Two of Paul's companions were hauled inside to face the outraged citizenry.

v.30 Paul wanted to go to address the whole city

v.31 The *Ephesian Christians* say "no"

The *Asiarchs*, political officials and Paul's friends said over and over "no, don't give yourself" in the theatre.

These men were not Christians but respected Paul as they observed his life.

v.32 But in the theatre... "pandemonium"

Popular indignation had full expression.

Note: Luke's sense of humor on the populace...

- All disagree
- No one knows *why* they were protesting

v.33-34- Jewish unbelievers sought to distance themselves.

So... for two hours a tribal *chant!*

This is a dark spot "mob rule to kill Paul/end the faith.

And no Christian... no Jew... no Asiarch... can help.

But 2 Corinthians 1 occurs here...

- Paul was dead in his estimation.
- Paul trusted in an infinite God.
- And this shaped him for the rest of his life.

What will God do?

v.35 An unexpected source: a non-Christian politician!

- The executive officer of the civic assembly who *represented Rome* and *answered* to Rome, was the Ephesian liaison for Rome, and the one who would be found accountable if a riot had occurred.

First, he sought to calm the assembly and answers Demetrius:

- "Don't worry about the honor of Artemis"
- All know her image fell from heaven, of no mortal workmanship.
- v.36 • So keep calm.
- v.37 • Because *these men* are blameless and respectful.
- v.38 • Here is the legal way... bring a legal suit.
- v.39 • And that's the law. You cannot mess with Christians over religion!
- v.40 • And you are the ones about to get in a heap of trouble.

Conclusion: