

Acts 19:21-41- the Word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed

v.21 **Paul purposed in the Spirit:** Guided by the Holy Spirit, Paul determined his itinerary. He decided to travel through Macedonia and Achaia, then to Jerusalem, then to Rome.

Luke doesn't mention it here, but we know that one reason why Paul wanted to go through Macedonia and Achaia, then to Jerusalem was to collect and deliver a fund he had been collecting from other churches to help out the church in Jerusalem ([Romans 15:25-31](#); [1 Corinthians 16:1-4](#)).

v.23 About that time there arose a great commotion about the Way: When the work was going so well, and when Paul was thinking about leaving Ephesus, another **commotion** arose. Again, for the third time in Acts (and the second time in this chapter) the Christian movement is called **the Way**.

v.24 **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:** This tremendous temple to Diana (also known as Artemis) in Ephesus was regarded as one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. It was supported by 127 pillars, each 60 feet high, and was decorated with great sculptures. It was lost to history until it was discovered in 1869, and its main altar was unearthed in 1965.

“The epicenter of Diana/Artemis worship was a black meteorite that either resembled or had been fashioned into a grotesque image of a woman. The lower part was wrapped like a mummy...the idol was covered with breasts, symbolizing fertility.” (Hughes)

“The Temple of Diana/ Artemis was also a major treasury and bank of the ancient world, where merchants, kings, and even cities made deposits, and where their money could be kept safe under the protection of deity.” (Longenecker)

Whom all Asia and the world worship: The temple of Diana in Ephesus was indeed famous around the world.

The opposition of Demetrius and the other idol makers was a great compliment to the effectiveness of Paul's work in the region. Paul was not on a campaign to close down the temple of Diana; he just did the Lord's work. As people came to Jesus, they naturally stopped worshipping Diana and buying shrines associated with the temple.

Christianity should affect the economy – not just personally, but in a community as well. This effect will not always be welcomed. In Ephesus, business was down at the pagan shrines because of the transforming work of the Jesus Christ. This happens again and again as Jesus does His work. For example, a Roman official named Pliny later wrote a letter to another official named Trajan, describing how people were not going to shrines anymore because of Christian influence. Pliny wanted to know what he should do about it.

Not a formal boycott, behavior just changed

Also the temple of the great goddess Diana may be despised and her magnificence destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worship: Demetrius was clever in how he spoke to the crowd. He first appealed to them both on the basis of financial self-interest, and then on the basis of civic pride (“How dare Paul insult and despise our great temple!”).

Whom all Asia and the world worship is the “everybody does it” argument. “Everybody does this” and “everybody thinks this” are not eloquent arguments, but they are powerful.

Yet in [Acts 19:37](#), the city clerk specifically said that Paul had *not* blasphemed the goddess Diana. Paul was on a pro-Jesus campaign more than an anti-everything else campaign.

v (29-34) **The riot builds momentum.**

The whole city was filled with confusion, and rushed into the theater with one accord: Considering Rome’s iron-fisted attitude towards such civil disorder, things were rapidly getting out of hand.

It has often happened in the history of Christianity that when God moves among His people and they become very serious about their Christianity, that it affects the livelihood of those who trade in vice or immorality. For example, in the early years of the Salvation Army, they were so effective that pimps and bar owners organized a “Skeleton Army” to oppose them with threats and violence – and even a few Salvation Army workers were murdered.

They drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward: Alexander wanted to make sure that the mob knew that the Jews did not approve of Paul either; but he accomplished nothing before the angry crowd.

v.34 **Great is Diana of the Ephesians!** This repeated chant must have sent a chill up the backs of the Christians, including Paul who no doubt could hear it from outside the theater.

For two hours they shouted, “**Great is Diana of the Ephesians!**” Think of how this echoes to our own time, and see the strangeness of our world. People say today, in words, actions, time or dollars spent:

- “Great is my sports team!”
- “Great is my political party!”
- “Great is the consumer economy!”
- “Great is internet porn!”
- “Great is material wealth!”
- “Great is getting drunk or getting high!”

And yet if one says, “Great is the Lord Jesus Christ” – *they* are regarded by many as strange.

For all the supposed greatness of Diana of the Ephesians, no one worships her today (at least directly). Yet there are millions and millions today who live for and worship Jesus Christ, and who would willingly die for Him. Idols and false gods all have expiration dates – Jesus of Nazareth lives forever.

v. (35-41) God worked mightily in Ephesus, but so did the devil. This may be one reason why Paul wrote so specifically about the spiritual battle each Christian faces against powers of spiritual darkness in his letter to the Ephesians (Ephesians 6:10-20).

First an overview of who we are in Jesus

We've been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places- chosen in Him- holy and blameless before Him in love- adopted as sons- redeemed through His blood- sins are forgiven according to the riches of His grace- mystery of His will has been made known to us- obtained an inheritance according to His purpose- sealed with the Holy Spirit- know the hope of His calling and the riches of His glory- have the same power that raised Jesus from the dead at work in us- seated in the heavenlies with Jesus with all principality, power, might and dominion- made alive when we were once dead in sin- raised together with Him- created for works which He created for us to walk in

Who do we war against ? Satan and his forces- fallen angels- a liar- deceiver who has been defeated

Romans 8 If God is for us, who can be against us...in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us

- gates of hell will not prevail against church- Matt.16:18

v.10 Finally- as for the rest be strong in the Lord and in His power- remember we have the same power that raised Jesus from the dead at work in us

v.11 Put on- before we put on armor we must put on Jesus- put on the new man as in chapter 4

- stand - stand your ground- we are not attacking kingdom of darkness, Jesus has won the battle, Satan tries to usurp it, the promised land is ours not the enemies

- wiles- In Job God asks Satan " Have you considered (do you have a plan for) my servant Job." we will be attacked

v.12 we wrestle- wrestling was a serious business, frequently the loser would have his eyes gouged out

- our enemy is spiritual, not mystical- we do need to learn mystical techniques to battle the enemy- it is not necessary to be able to identify the demons responsible, we have the victory

- although we see battle taking place here, these are just things used

- also some things just happen as a course of living in a fallen world

- In Daniel 10 we see an angel telling Daniel that the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood him and there was a spiritual battle going on- but don't get too hung up on things like " This Present Darkness" " Piercing the Darkness" etc.

v.13 Take up- its at your feet, just avail yourself of it- its your choice- victory is not a theoretical goal but a reality

- evil day- this is not an endtimes reference but today, chapter 5 says to walk wisely redeeming the time, because the days are evil

v.13 stand in the midst-v.14 stand ready for battle

In Isaiah 11 and 59 it refers to some of these things as the Lord's armor

Example of recent shooting of police officer wearing body armor

He said that he knew his body armor would protect him so he did his job

* Historian named Gibbon who wrote the Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire said that the relaxed discipline and failure to exercise made soldiers weak and lazy and they laid aside parts of their armor and were defeated

waist girded with truth

Three purposes of belt

- to gather tunic together so you would have freedom of movement
- help hold up breastplate
- hold the scabbard containing your sword

Truth- Doctrine- why is it so important to have solid doctrine ?

- when they entered into the promised land they were not to join with the world- however the church today says that its okay to compromise- one leader of the Toronto blessing movement said that every move contains carnality, the flesh, and the devil and that its okay, just go with it even if there is no Scriptural basis- **WRONG** the first thing we must have is the truth from the Word of God

Breastplate of Righteousness- heart protector- Jesus righteousness

Feet shod- Shoes thickly studded with nails for mobility- Josephus writes that the success of both Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar was due in large part to the ability of their troops to move swiftly on rough terrain

- good news of peace

Shield of faith- 2ft. x 4ft. quenches all the fiery darts

Take helmet of salvation- armor bearer would hand helmet to soldier- picture of the Father handing us the gift of salvation- I Thess. 5:8 helmet is the hope (or assurance) of salvation

Sword of the Spirit - short double edged offensive weapon-

- word of God - not logos (written) but rhema (personal)- to personally use Scripture, you have to know it and live it

Praying always with all prayer and supplication- prayer needs to be a lifestyle, not just a part

- for each other- watch one anothers back, this is the only exposed part

- the Word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed