



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

The Carefully Crafted Riot at Ephesus

MAY 1-3, 2019

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Acts 19:30-41 *And when Paul wanted to go into 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 theatre. 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. 34) But when they found out he was a Jew, all with one voice cried out for about two hours, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" 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 Diana, 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 into 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. (NKJV)*

"THEY SET A NET FOR MY STEPS; MY SOUL WAS BOWED DOWN; THEY DUG A PIT IN MY WAY, BUT THEY HAVE FALLEN INTO IT THEMSELVES. SELAH"
KING DAVID IN PSALM 57:6

Why did the disciples and the officials of Asia keep Paul from the theatre? Does Luke relate a bit of satire about this confused mob? What was Alexander trying to do? Why this two hour commotion over Diana? Is the city clerk in trouble? Are they already guilty before the Roman law? Who lost favor with everyone in Ephesus by endangering the city's freedom?

FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDIES:

- > MAY 8-10: ACTS 20:1-6 **PAUL'S INCREDIBLE MISSION TEAM**
- > MAY 15-17: ACTS 20:7-12 **PAUL'S ALL NIGHT SUNDAY SERMON**

Sales and profits had been noticeably tumbling for the silversmiths in Ephesus and Demetrius had figured out why it had happened. He traced it back to a single sentence that Paul was preaching which overcame the deceit of idolatry: "*They are not gods which are made with hands*" (Acts 19:26). The logic was concise, clear and powerful. Aware that they have no legal case against Paul, they start a riot to lynch him. But Paul was nowhere to be found when they started the riot, so they hoped to lure him by illegally and forcibly retaining two on his mission team in the midst of their newly sparked angry mob. They knew Paul was courageous and would probably come to the rescue of his team. The trap was laid.

"IT WAS NOT PAUL'S INTENTION TO AVOID DANGERS TO WHICH HIS SUBORDINATES WERE EXPOSED; HE WISHED TO 'GO INTO THE PEOPLE.'" C. K. BARRETT

BIBLE STUDIES

WEDNESDAY @ 7:30AM –BIBLE STUDY – FREDERICKSBURG – BOB EVANS ON RT. 3 & 10:30AM – WOODBRIDGE – BOB EVANS, 14490 SMOKETOWN RD.

THURSDAY @ 7:00AM –BIBLE STUDY – CHESTER – SHONEY'S AT RT. 10 & 301 ALSO NOON- DEPT. OF CAPITOL POLICE-TRAINING ROOM

FRIDAY @ 7:00 AM –BIBLE STUDY – SUFFOLK – VILLAGE INN, 6116 COLLEGE DRIVE, NEAR HAMPTON ROADS CROSSING

Virginia

The Carefully Crafted Riot at Ephesus

I. PAUL'S SELFLESSNESS

ACTS 19:30-31

Never lacking in boldness, Paul had evangelized so powerfully that “*all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks*” (Acts 19:10). This is an extremely unusual scene outside the theatre where Paul is continually “*wanting*” and trying to make his way to the entrance and his disciples who have lived in Ephesus know this is a trap and they constantly “*would not allow him*” to sacrifice his life unnecessarily. Evidently Paul almost persuades them to let him go, while others contacted the leaders of the city to help them. When his friends with authority over the city, “*sent to him pleading that he would not venture into the theatre,*” It is probable that this struggle continued for two hours. He had worked to build relationships with the leaders of the city to win them to Christ according to his commission (Acts 9:15). Now these leaders rescue him from the power of the mob through persistent pleading and persuasion. Paul was selfless in his love for his fellow-workers in the faith.

“A NEW COMMANDMENT I GIVE TO YOU, THAT YOU LOVE ONE ANOTHER; AS I HAVE LOVED YOU, THAT YOU ALSO LOVE ONE ANOTHER. BY THIS ALL WILL KNOW THAT YOU ARE MY DISCIPLES, IF YOU HAVE LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER.”
JESUS CHRIST IN JOHN 13:34-35

II. THE MOB'S SEIGE

ACTS 19:32-34

Meanwhile the mob has Gaius and Aristarchus, “*Paul's travel companions,*” captive and surrounded. Through the screaming of the silversmiths, an excited and confused crowd is gathering into the theatre. Their official religion is the worship of Diana and this is probably the time of the year when worshippers throughout the world have flocked to Ephesus for the yearly festival. Both the locals and pilgrims, wondering what is happening, are adding their shouts to the bedlam. Luke humors us with his description of the chaos, “*most of them did not know why they had come together.*” It doesn't take the Jews long to

understand that the silversmiths were agitating this mob against those who did not believe in their idolatry (Jews & Christians). The Jews also discern that this riot was being orchestrated against the Christians because of their arrest of two from Paul's mission team. Quickly, their strongest spokesperson, Alexander, is briefed and put forward to address the crowd. The silversmiths immediately suspect that the Jews will try to stop their riot, so they lead in shouting him down and screaming for two hours, chanting: “*Great is Diana of the Ephesians!*”

“HE SAW UNDOUBTEDLY DEMETRIUS' MALICE, AND HOW HE HAD TROUBLED THE CITY, ABUSING THE PRETENCE OF RELIGION FOR HIS OWN PRIVATE GAIN; BUT HE TOUCHETH NOT THE WOUND WHICH HE KNEW TO BE UNKNOWN TO THE UNSKILFUL.” JOHN CALVIN

III. THE CLERK'S SOLUTION

ACTS 19:35-41

This city clerk was the highest elected official of the city and the liaison between the Ephesians and their Roman authorities. He must not only quiet this riot, he must disperse them peacefully. He first appeals to a majority mindset by reminding them that Diana was the most famous and respected—they had no need to riot about what everyone knew. Second, he appealed to their guilt of crime in arresting the innocent—their victims had committed no wrong. Third, he appealed to their ringleaders to act lawfully—bring their case to court where disputes are decided by the appropriate authorities. Fourth, he includes himself twice and specifically his responsibility to answer to the Romans on their behalf as the elected leader of a free city. Such a riot endangered, not only his position as an elected official, but the future freedom of the entire city to even have elections for their immediate authorities! As they were leaving, everyone knew that they had been abused by the silversmiths.

Questions to Ponder:

- 1) Are you loving towards other believers such that your love is active, selfless and even sacrificial for them?
- 2) Do you make friends with all the leaders around and above you in order to give them the Gospel?
- 3) Do you follow the crowd without thinking or even fall into pits that you have dug for others?