

=THE BOOK OF ACTS=
Lesson 19
The Uproar at Ephesus - Acts 19

AIM: to teach my pupils the facts about the city of Ephesus and something of Paul's ministry there.

POINT OF CONTACT: The biggest thing about Acts 19 is the uproar of the silversmiths at Ephesus. There are several points of contact that could be used. For the smaller children, especially the boys, you might ask them how many ever saw a fight. Ask them something about a fight. You might even ask them how many ever got in a fight and what caused it and who won. Also, you might get some little type of trinket that could be the object of worship for some people. You might even discuss with them how many things have been the object of worship. Men have worshipped rivers, cows, frogs, insects, the sun, the moon, the stars, images, feathers, dogs, cats and most every other thing imaginable. You might ask the class to share with you some things that people have worshipped. See how many they can think of. This will lead up to the discussion of the silver shrines of Diana mentioned in our lesson for today. (Acts 19:24)

INTRODUCTION: Paul has just left Athens and Corinth. Now he comes to Ephesus. You will bear in mind that Athens was a city of culture and education. Corinth was a city of pleasure, vice and sin. Ephesus is still a different type city. Let us look at Ephesus and some of the events that happened there.

I. THE CITY OF EPHEBUS.

1. Its population was immense.
2. Its seas and rivers were rich with fish.
3. Its position among the cities of its day was unrivaled.
4. It was the crossroads of travel. Ephesus was at the meeting point of great roads which led north to Sardis and Troas and south to Antioch.
5. The outstanding thing about Ephesus was that it was a shopping and fashion center. Its markets glittered with the best of the world's art, and it was the "vanity fair" of Asia. It was a place of merchandise of gold, silver, precious stones, pearls, fine linen, purple, silk and scarlet. Sold in its markets were fine wood, vessels of ivory, vessels of precious wood, brass, iron, marble, etc. The world's finest perfumes were found there. Elite wine could be bought in Ephesus. There you could purchase the finest sheep, horses, chariots and slaves.

Now, compare this with Athens and Corinth. Athens was a great educational center; Corinth, a great entertainment center. Ephesus was a great fashion and shopping center. They were three different type towns, all entered by the Apostle Paul and all hearing the same Gospel.

6. Ephesus was also profoundly religious. It was the location of the great Temple of Diana, which at that time was deemed one of the "seven wonders of the world." It was a tremendous building. It took 220 years to build this temple. Its length was 425 feet. It was 220 feet wide. It was beautified by 127 columns which were made at the expense of many kings. It was adorned by the most beautiful of statues. It was burned to the ground by Erostratus the same night on which Alexander the Great was born. Alexander the Great offered to rebuild it and make it as magnificent as it was before, if he could put his name on the front, but he was refused. It was, however, rebuilt afterwards, but then Nero destroyed it.
7. It was into this kind of a city the Apostle Paul came to preach the Gospel.
8. Paul stayed here longer than at any other place thus far on his journeys, and here he built a great work for God.

II. THE WORK OF THE GOSPEL IN EPHEBUS.

1. Paul had many converts, and in the area around Ephesus many churches were started. The church at Ephesus became a center church; by that, we mean that many little churches were started from it, and it was sort of the mother church in that area. It was, no doubt, a very big church and one that influenced an entire area.
2. It was such a good ministry that the business of idol-makers was hurt. Read Acts 19:27a. The citizens of Ephesus had many little shrines of Diana which were sold on every street corner and were

placed in every home. So many Ephesians were being converted that the business of the shrine-makers was endangered. This gives some indication of the type ministry Paul had at Ephesus.

3. Even the religion of Ephesus was in danger. See Acts 19:26, 27. What a tremendous success this was! Of course, this religion was the worship of Diana.

III. THE UPROAR.

1. The uproar was caused by Demetrius, a silversmith. He called together other makers of idols and alerted them as to the dangers that Paul was bringing to their business. Acts 19:23-27.
2. The uproar was occasioned by the fact that it was the month of May. It was the time of the great gathering of those who worshipped Diana throughout this part of Asia. The city was filled with her worshippers. This, of course, gave Paul a good chance to preach the Gospel of Christ. Great crowds of people came together for worship. The theater in which this uproar took place was capable of seating 20,000 to 30,000 people. No doubt this was a tremendous uproar.
3. Notice the hypocrisy of these false religionists, especially in Acts 19:27. They were concerned about their craft first and their religion second. This is the great problem with Christianity today. We are more concerned about our trade first, our school first, our home first, rather than Jesus Christ. Matthew 6:33a says, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness...." We are to give God the first day of the week, the first tenth of the income, the first place in our lives.
4. In spite of these tremendous trials and the large opposition, the work of God grew and multiplied. Many were saved; the work flourished. Paul tells us in Acts 20:20 that he preached the Gospel publicly and from house to house. This is exactly what we try to do at First Baptist Church. It is the ministry of the church. One of the great centers of religious work and one of the great thriving churches grew at Ephesus.

IV. THE END OF EPHESUS. One could not truly know the work of Ephesus without reading the second chapter of Revelation. Years have passed since the great ministry there. John, on Patmos, is writing a letter to the church at Ephesus. This is found in Revelation 2:1-7. Let us notice what had happened. Notice the condition of the church.

1. It was a working church. Revelation 2:2a.
2. It was a church of labor. Revelation 2:2b.
3. It was a patient church. Revelation 2:2c.
4. They hated sin. Revelation 2:2d, "and how thou canst not bear them which are evil."
5. They were loyal to the doctrines. Revelation 2:2e, "thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars."
6. They were persistent. Revelation 2:3.
7. They had left their first love. Revelation 2:4. They had lost the joy and the thrill of Christianity. They were going through the motions but did not have their hearts in it. They were having worship services but not true worship. They sang their songs but not in praise. They had their church activities but were not in love with Christ.
8. They had not done their first work. Revelation 2:5. What were their first works? Simply this: preaching the Gospel and going from house to house with the truth of God.
9. God said that He would remove the candlestick. Revelation 2:5. According to Revelation 1:20, the candlestick was the church. This certainly happened in Ephesus. Its candlestick has for centuries been removed out of its place. There is not one church in that area today. Its temple is a mass of shapeless ruins. Its harbor is a reedy pool. It has lost its candlestick. This same thing has happened to many churches, cities and countries—and yea, even many Christians.

QUESTIONS:

1. Who was the goddess worshipped in Ephesus?
2. What kind of city was Athens?
3. What kind of city was Corinth?
4. What kind of city was Ephesus?

5. Did Paul stay at Ephesus long?
6. What was the month of May in Ephesus?
7. How many people could the theater seat?
8. What was the name of the man who caused the uproar?
9. What was his craft?
10. Why did he cause the uproar?
11. What kind of success did Paul have at Ephesus?
12. What kind of church did he build there?
13. Did it have an influence on the entire area or was it a local situation?
14. How did Paul reach all of these people? In other words, what methods did he use?
15. What kind of temple was located in Ephesus?
16. What did people have in their homes in the way of idols?
17. Did Paul's ministry influence the sale of these idols?

MEMORY VERSE: "and have taught you publicly, and from house to house," Acts 20:20b.