

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

An Exposition

by

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CHAPTER NINETEEN

The chapter which we have reached is as interesting as it is important.

In the foreground stands another manifestation of the Holy Spirit, when He came upon the twelve disciples of John and they spake with tongues. This is followed by extraordinary blessings and the manifestation of the power of God and the power of Satan. The acts of the Holy Spirit and of Satan are very pronounced in this chapter.

Then the chapter is important because Paul's first step towards Jerusalem is recorded.

We divide the chapter in five parts.

- I. The second visit of Paul to Ephesus. The twelve disciples of John** (Verses 1-7).
- II. The Apostle's continued labors. The separation of the disciples. The Province Asia evangelized** (Verses 8-10).
- III. The Power of God and the Power of Satan** (Verses 11-20).
- IV. Paul plans to go to Jerusalem and to visit Rome** (Verses 21-22).
- V. The opposition and riot at Ephesus** (Verses 23-41).

I. The second visit of Paul to Ephesus. The twelve disciples of John.

“And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus; and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve” (Verses 1-7).

Once more Paul appears in Ephesus and is brought now in touch with certain disciples. Some have taken them to have been the fruit of Apollos' labors in Ephesus. If that had been the case and Apollos knew them, he certainly would have imparted unto them the knowledge his own soul so richly enjoyed through the instructions of the godly Priscilla and Aquila.

As Ephesus was a large city it is not surprising that the twelve disciples were not known to Paul during his first and very brief visit, nor to Priscilla and Aquila.

When Paul met these disciples he must have been impressed with some lack in them. Perhaps the joy and peace which should characterize every true Christian was completely absent in them and therefore the Apostle asked at once a very vital and fundamental question:

“Have ye received the Holy Spirit since ye believed?”

But the word “**since**” has more the thought of “*when*.” Upon this little word “**since**” certain preachers and Bible teachers have built their unscriptural theory that the Holy Spirit must be definitely received in a second experience, which they either term a “*second blessing*”, “*baptism of the Holy Spirit*” or by some other name.

According to these teachers a person may be a Christian, a true disciple, saved by Grace and yet be entirely destitute of the Holy Spirit. The word “**since**” is always emphasized by these men. “**Have ye received the Holy Spirit since ye believed?**” You must get the Holy Spirit after you have believed and accepted the Lord Jesus Christ. Then a lot of rules how to surrender and to receive the Holy Spirit are given. All this is wrong. If the word “*when*” is simply understood, this whole misconception would disappear.

Paul makes the gift of the Spirit a test of true discipleship.

If they were true believers they received the Holy Spirit when they believed, that is when they accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

If they did not receive the Holy Spirit then it is an evidence that they did not believe.

“Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His” (Romans 8:9).

But were these disciples whom Paul met Christian disciples? Not at all.

They knew nothing whatever of Christianity.

Their knowledge about the person of Christ was more limited than the knowledge which Apollos possessed. The questions put by the Apostle brings out the fact that they knew nothing whatever of the gift of the Holy Spirit and that they had been baptized with John's baptism unto repentance.

This is how far their creed went: of Christ and His great redemption work they knew nothing whatever.

Though the record does not give an account of it Paul must have preached Christ and the Gospel to those twelve disciples. Then they believed and were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. *

* This is the only case of rebaptism recorded in Acts. Notice that it was not Christian baptism with which they had been previously baptized in water.

After the laying on of hands the Holy Spirit came on them and they spake with tongues and prophesied. These were the outward signs. They were then sealed by the Holy Spirit and added by Him as members to the body of Christ, the church.

This is the last time in this book that we read that the Holy Spirit was given and that they spoke with tongues.

It is well to review the few times reported in this historical book, when the Holy Spirit was communicated to the different companies of believers.

1. On the day of Pentecost. The one hundred and twenty were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke with other tongues. No laying on of hands is mentioned here. They were all Jews who received the Holy Spirit on that day (Acts 2).

2. Peter and John went to Samaria. The Samaritans had believed and had been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, but the Holy Spirit had not been given to them. The reason was explained by us in the exposition of Chapter 8. Peter and John laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. Nothing is said that they prophesied or spoke in tongues.

3. While Peter preached the Gospel to Cornelius and his house the Holy Spirit fell on them which heard the Word. They spoke with tongues and praised God (Acts 10).

4. The last record in our present chapter. Jews in the dispersion receive the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands by the Apostle Paul. In every case it is the same Holy Spirit, the promise of the Father, who came down from heaven on the day of Pentecost. It would be incorrect to say that He came anew from heaven, when the Samaritans, the Gentiles and the twelve disciples received Him. He came to this earth on the day of Pentecost and no other coming was necessary.

It is unscriptural to speak of “another outpouring” of the Holy Spirit or pray for a new baptism with the Spirit. But the different records show different manifestations of the same Spirit upon different groups of people, Jews, Samaritans and Gentiles.

That all this is not to be repeated is obvious.

Apostles communicated the Spirit by laying on of hands. There are no more apostles and apostolic authority, unless some one believes in that ridiculous, if not evil, doctrine of apostolic succession. That Paul here laid on his hands and the Holy Spirit was given to these twelve men just as the Samaritans received the Spirit after the laying on of hands of Peter and John, proved him to be an Apostle just as much as they.

This is striking, for the enemies of Paul, the Judaizing teachers, which were corrupting the

Galatian churches, vigorously denied the authority of the Apostle Paul.

But the Holy Spirit is no longer communicated in this extraordinary way, but by the hearing of faith, and every child of God possesses Him as the indwelling guest. Our endeavor is not to seek more of Him, but to let Him take possession of us, for which He has come to our hearts when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ.

To seek the so-called "gift of tongues" as a sign that we have the Holy Spirit, is a morbid condition and a dangerous desire.

II. The Apostle's continued labors. The separation of the disciples. The province of Asia evangelized.

"And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading as to the things concerning the kingdom of God. But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks" (Verses 8-10).

Paul continued to labor in the synagogue, but matters had now to reach a climax. For three months he disputed with the Jews. The great theme was the Kingdom of God, which means more than the teaching concerning that Kingdom, which is promised to Israel and which some day will be established. No doubt it entered largely into the disputings of the Apostle with the Jews, but it was not confined to that phase of the Kingdom.

Jews who believe their own Scriptures and still hold to the Jewish hope are quite willing to listen to arguments touching the realization of this hope; but if the Kingdom of God is preached which is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit (Romans 14:17) they oppose this and harden their hearts.

This deeper message of the Gospel was not received by the multitude of Jews. Some hardened themselves and were disobedient and spoke evil of that way. Separation from this unbelieving and disobedient mass was the next step. In this way the assembly in Ephesus was formed.

A number of brethren were also with Paul in Ephesus. His own hands ministered unto his own necessities and to them that were with him (Acts 20:34). The same information we gain from the Epistle to the Galatians, which Paul wrote from Ephesus with his own hand (Galatians 1:2).

These companions of Paul were Timotheus and Erastus, Gaius and Aristarchus, two brethren of Thessalonica, Titus, Tychicus and Trophimus (Acts 19:22, 29; Acts 20:4; II Corinthians 7:6). Then there were Aquila and Priscilla and a number of converts. The first fruit was undoubtedly Epaenetus (Romans 16:5), also Onesiphorus and his house (II Timothy 1:16), Hymenaeus, Alexander, Phygellus and Hermogenes of whose bad record we read in I Timothy 1:20 and II Timothy 1:15.

The assembly had elders and of them and the Apostle's faithful labors we shall read more in the

next chapter. The record here tells us that the work was continued in the school of one Tyrannus, some large building obtained for that purpose. Most likely the assembly itself met elsewhere. Then the entire province of Asia of which Ephesus was the capital heard the Word of the Lord Jesus, both Jew and Greeks. A blessed work of evangelization was done.

III. The power of God and the power of Satan.

“And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul. So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them. Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame both of them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds. Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed” (Verses 11-20).

Ephesus was a stronghold of Satan. Here many evil things both superstitious and satanic were practiced. Books containing formula for sorcery and other ungodly and forbidden arts were plentiful in that city. The Jews themselves were contaminated with these evil practices. God was pleased to perform special miracles by the hands of Paul. Handkerchiefs and aprons he had used healed the sick and drove out demons.

Rationalists and higher critics explain these miracles as being simply superstitions.

“But in this and similar narratives Christian faith finds no difficulty whatever. All miraculous working is an exertion of the direct power of God; a suspension by Him of His ordinary laws; and whether He will use any instrument in doing this, or what instrument, must depend altogether on His own purpose in the miracle—the effect to be produced on the recipients, beholders, or bearers.” *

* Greek New Testament - Alford.

God wanted to bear witness to His messenger and His message that they were of Him and therefore He manifested here His extraordinary power. But this power was not in Paul nor were such manifestations to continue. They ceased.

That which claims to be a continuation in the Romish church (relics, most of them spurious, for which claim is made that they possess miraculous powers) is nothing but superstition and fanaticism.

Equally fanatical are the present day claims of a certain class of Christians, that the apostolic

Pentecostal gifts are being restored. It is a foolish thing, to say the least, if some of these misguided people imitate what is recorded here in connection with the great Apostle, and send handkerchiefs about, claiming that they actually have cured sickness.

That this manifestation of the power of God in this most remarkable way was likewise needed to bring to naught the evil powers of darkness, which were so active in Ephesus, is revealed in what follows.

Jewish instruments of Satan in the person of the sons of Sceva, a chief priest, men who were sorcerers and dealt in magic, were in Ephesus.

This is the fourth time we read of such satanic instruments.

- The first was Simon Magus. This subtle instrument claimed to be converted and tried to buy the power of the Holy Spirit with money.
- Elymas, or Bar Jesus, was the second, and he opposed the Gospel, going forth to the Gentiles, a type, as we pointed out in our exposition, of the Jewish nation in their opposition and blindness.
- In Philippi a damsel with the spirit of Python had cried after Paul and through her the enemy had tried his work.

The seven sons of Sceva tried to imitate the power of God as it was manifested through Paul; but they knew not the Lord Jesus Christ. They were professional exorcists travelling from place to place and preaching the expulsion of evil spirits. All kinds of mysterious things were used by these exorcists; the use of different names of God in driving out the evil spirits were especially resorted to. The so-called Kabbala and many parts of the Talmud are full of these mysterious things of magic. In some cases no doubt there was reality, as we learn from Matthew 12:27.

The sons of Sceva used the name of Jesus over a man who had an evil spirit.

“We adjure you by Jesus, whom Paul preaches.”

They used simply the name of Jesus and avoided the name Lord. The effect was disastrous. The demon acknowledged that he knew Jesus and Paul, but **“who are ye?”** The man with fury, energized by the superhuman strength of the demon, overcame the two, tore their clothes so that naked and wounded they had to flee from the house. The demon turned against them.

A worse fate will some day befall those, who use the name, which is above every other name, without being His.

“Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy Name? and in Thy Name cast out demons? and in Thy Name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from Me, ye that work iniquity” (Matthew 12:22-23).

The punishment which had fallen upon the sons of Sceva made a profound impression upon the whole city and that blessed name which is above every other name was magnified.

Many of those who had believed seemed to have been secretly attached to these curious arts - that is, magical things. They were deeply convicted of this sin and then confessed the evil deeds of darkness. But more than that, they brought their parchments and rolls which contained the magical formulas, incantations and adjurations. These formulas and written amulets had at that time a world-wide reputation and were known by the name "*Ephesia gramata*" - the Ephesian letters. They brought them together and burned them before all men.

Some eight thousand dollars' worth of manuscripts was quickly consumed by the flames. A greater fire would result if the evil books, books on Occultism, Spiritualism, especially that wicked work, which is placed alongside the Bible, the textbook of "Christian Science" - Science and Health, and others were piled up to be burned. But such a day is coming when the fire shall consume these evil works of darkness. A great victory had been gained over the power of Satan. **"So mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed."**

IV. Paul Plans to go to Jerusalem and visit Rome.

"After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome. So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season" (Verses 21-22).

We reach now a critical point in the labors of the great Apostle.

The 21st verse marks an important change, which introduces us to the last stage of the recorded acts of Paul in this historical account. Rome is the goal, which looms up before him. **"I must also see Rome."**

And he saw Rome, but not in the way as he purposed in his spirit, but as the prisoner of the Lord.

His journey begins now towards that great city and at the close of the book we find him there a prisoner, **"preaching the Kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him."**

The story of his journey to Jerusalem, a journey in which he perseveres though repeatedly warned by the Spirit of God, his arrest in Jerusalem, his trials and addresses before the Jews, before Felix, Festus and King Agrippa, his voyage to Rome and shipwreck and arrival in Rome are the contents of the remaining part of our book.

The record of great victories of the Gospel and its spread by the Apostle to the Gentiles comes suddenly to an end and we see that Gospel he preached opposed by Judaism and legalism as well as by the great world-power Rome. The great apostle with his God-given, heavenly-revealed Gospel of the Glory is shut up in Rome. It is nothing less than a great prophecy of what was to happen to that Gospel.

A recent writer on the Book of Acts calls this part of the book, "*the passing and passion of Paul.*"

He sees a correspondency between the Lord and Paul. Like our Lord, Paul was accused by the Jews and delivered by them into the hands of the Gentiles. The Lord had said of Paul, **“I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name’s sake”** (Acts 9:16).

He had sufferings and afflictions in many ways throughout the years of his great activity. In his second Epistle to the Corinthians he rehearses these.

“Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep. In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren. In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness” (II Corinthians 11:24-27).

But now the time of his special sufferings were drawing near.

Of this fact the Holy Spirit testified directly (Acts 20:23; 21:11).

The question has often been raised how the purposing of Paul in the spirit to go again to Jerusalem is to be understood. Is the word **“spirit”** to be written with a capital **“S”** or not? In other words, did he purpose in the Spirit of God after prolonged prayer, to go up to Jerusalem? Did the Holy Spirit guide him to take up to the city of his fathers the contributions from Achaia and Macedonia for the poor saints? (Romans 15:25-26).

It could not have been the Spirit of God who prompted him to go once more to Jerusalem, for we find that during the journey the Holy Spirit warned him a number of times not to go to Jerusalem. These warnings were not heeded, but they prove conclusively that Paul purposed in his own spirit.

He was called to evangelize; to continue to preach the glorious Gospel, and it was a turning aside from the great ministry committed unto him.

But behind his burning desire to go up to Jerusalem stood the mighty constraint of love for his own beloved brethren. How he did love them and how his heart, filled with the love of God, yearned over them!

This love is so fully expressed in his Epistle to the Romans.

“I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed (or separated) from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh” (Romans 9:1-2).

“Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved” (Romans 10:1).

This holy love and courage prompted him to say, when once more his brethren had besought him by the Spirit not to go up to Jerusalem, **“What mean ye to weep and break my heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus”** (Acts 21:13).

And the Lord in His mercy, who knows the motives of the heart, overruled the error of His servant.

Later from the prison in Rome, Paul could write in his joyous Epistle to the Philippians.

“But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel; so that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places” (Philippians 1:12-13).

All things, even our mistakes, must work together for good. Before we can follow Paul on his last journey to Jerusalem, we have to consider the account of the riot which took place in Ephesus.

V. The opposition and the riot at Ephesus.

“And the same time there arose no small stir about that way. For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen; whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands. So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at naught; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth.

“And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great Diana of the Ephesians. And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul’s companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre.

“And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not. And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring him that he would not adventure himself into the theatre. Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together. And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defence unto the people. But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.

“And when the town clerk had appeased the people, he said, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great

goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter; Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly. For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess. Wherefore if Demetrius, and the craftsmen which are with him, have a matter against any man, the law is open and there are deputies: let them implead one another. But if ye inquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly. For we are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse. And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly" (Verses 23-41).

The Ephesian Gentiles became greatly agitated through the influence of the prince of the power of the air, the spirit of darkness, which worked in them (Ephesians 2:2). The result was the great riot.

R. P. Rackham writes:

"Fully to appreciate the incident, a more detailed account of Ephesus is required. At Ephesus there met together four authorities.

1. The supreme authority of Rome represented by the proconsul. For judicial purposes the provinces were divided into shires (conventus), each with its assize town. In the province Asia Ephesus was the chief assize town; and accordingly court days (verse 38) were kept there, when justice was administered by the pro-consul.

2. The city itself, like Athens, was 'free' and it retained its Greek constitution, which was democratic in form. There was a Senate, to which power gravitated in imperial times. But nominally Ephesus was still governed by the Demos or People (verse 30) assembled in their Ecclesia or assembly.

"An Ecclesia was held three times a month and these meetings were the regular or ordinary assemblies (verse 32), but an extraordinary assembly could be convened as on the present occasion. Where, as in cities of the empire, the powers of such an assembly were limited to purely domestic and formal matters, the substantial authority would fall into the hands of its secretary-the official who summoned and dismissed the assembly (verse 41), kept the minutes and acted as chairman. Thus the secretary of the assembly or town clerk (verse 35), would naturally be one of the magnates of the city; and this we find to have been the case from the inscriptions, in which the secretary often appears as also holding the highest office, such as the Asiarchate.

"3. The Asiarchate was a provincial office. Each province had a council composed of delegates from the chief cities. Their chief business was the supervision of the provincial worship of the emperor, a cult, which furnished, besides a test of royalty, a bond of unity for the empire. A temple and altar to Rome and the emperor were erected in some city and the common worship of the province was celebrated there with games and festivals.

"The president of the common council acted as high priest and presided over these festivities and games, which were given at his expense. In return, he enjoyed the title of 'Ruler of the

province' Asiarch (the one over the province Asia), Galatarch - over Galatia, etc. The Asiarchs of verse 31, then, were such high priests of the aristocracy and plutocracy of Asia. There is a difficulty in the use of the plural, for as a rule there was only one Ruler for a province. It has been suggested that the Ruler retained the designation as an honorary title after his period of office. But a better explanation is to be found in the exceptional prosperity of Asia."

The great temple, that of Diana (Artemis), was likewise in Ephesus. Excavations of this temple have been made in the past and numerous inscriptions bear witness to the goddess and the worship connected with it.

Her name is found in those inscriptions to have been exactly that, which the mob used, "**the Great Diana.**" The usual invocations to these goddesses were "Great Diana" or Artemis, the word used in the Greek. In other inscriptions she was called "the most great goddess."

The temple of itself was a magnificent structure. Some parts may be seen in the British Museum. The structure was about 420 feet long and nearly 250 wide. Hundreds of persons, such as priests, eunuchs, temple wardens, virgin priestesses, were in connection with the temple.

The temple was stored with rich treasures of gold and silver. A large part of the city lived on the trade, which had been created by the existence of the great temple and the thousands of pilgrims which flocked to the idolatrous festivities and games. There was a guild of silversmiths, and they manufactured shrines of Artemis and most likely all kinds of souvenirs, little models of the temple and the goddess.

Demetrius was the leader of this guild and in the meeting he called, he stated before the silversmiths that they well knew that this seemingly religious craft is the source of their wealth. Quite a confession this silversmith made. And it is not different in the great "world religion" though it may have the name of Christian attached to it. The same selling of idolatrous objects, rosaries, candles, statues, blessed (?) objects and many other things by which money is obtained under the cover of religion.

But Demetrius also bears witness to the great influence of the Gospel.

"This Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands."

How active Paul must have been and his testimony was backed up with the power of God. Not alone was the craft of the silversmith in great danger, but the great Diana and the temple was in danger of collapse under the preaching of the tentmaker of Tarsus.

It may have been a well-plotted scheme when the company of silversmiths in fury rushed out of their meeting room into the streets and shouted at the top of their voices. "**Great is Diana of the Ephesians.**"

The whole city was aroused. Gaius and Aristarchus, the Macedonian companions of Paul, were dragged into the theatre.

This was an enormous place, being able to shelter about 25,000 persons. Paul himself was ready to face the angry mob, but the disciples opposed him and even some of the friendly Asiarchs cautioned him against assuming such a risk.

The whole assembled company was an unruly mob, the great majority, perhaps, did not know what they had come for.

Then the Jews put forward one of their orators to address the mob, one Alexander. But he could not bring in a word. He was known as a Jew, and the Jews hated idolatry. For two hours the wild cry of the demonized multitude continued, "**Great is Diana of the Ephesians.**"

Then the town clerk appeared.

He settled the whole question in a very diplomatic way.

First he stated the popular superstition that the image of Artemis fell down from Jupiter. Then he exhorted them to quietness, and after some sound advice and showing the danger that the superior Roman officers might hold them responsible for their riotous behavior, he dismissed the assembly. *

* The Greek for assembly is *ecclesia*, "*the out called ones.*" This word is also used for the church. The *ecclesia* "of the Ephesian mob was called out by the silversmiths." the "*ecclesia*" of "the Lord Jesus Christ is called out by the Holy Spirit."

What might have happened if Paul had gone in person to the theatre may only be guessed at. God in His mercy shielded his servants, and the Devil was completely defeated in his efforts.

In the beginning of the next chapter, we find the Apostles once more in Macedonia and Achaia.

~ end of chapter 19 ~

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