

Acts: Laying Down Idols

(Acts 19:21-41)

Making Plans (v. 21-22)

- Despite all the success that Paul had seen in Ephesus and the surrounding area, he felt led to leave the area
 - The plan involved sending Timothy & Erastus back to Macedonia, while he stayed in Asia for a bit before following them through Greece, eventually returning to Jerusalem
- This was not a plan of Paul's own design, but rather was due to the Spirit's leading

A Threat to Business (v. 23-27)

- Meanwhile, a silversmith named Demetrius raised concerns about the swell of Christian converts
 - Based on his loss of business crafting idols/shrines of Artemis of Ephesus
 - But claiming concern for the loss of worship of Artemis
- Artemis of Ephesus
 - Originally not the same goddess associated with the Greek pantheon, though latter assimilated by the Greeks & Romans
 - The great mother goddess of fertility
 - The Temple of Artemis in Ephesus was one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world, centered around a meteorite (see v. 35)

Mob Mentality (v. 28-41)

- Demetrius riled up his fellow craftsmen and others against the Christians in the city
 - A mob formed and seized two Macedonian Christians, dragging them to the amphitheater
- When Paul wanted to step in, he was prevented by both other Christians and city officials who were his friends
- The fervor of the mob swept up people in the city, but many involved had no idea what the issue was
- When a Jew named Artemis tried to address them, he was shouted down
 - Meaning the crowd did not want to hear from anyone associated with a 'foreign' religion
- Finally, the town clerk addresses the crowd as one of their own
 - He asserts that the Christians have done nothing wrong, and tells Demetrius & the other craftsmen to take up their issue with the courts
 - And then tells the crowd to disperse before they are accused of rioting by the authorities

So What?

- Are there idols we need to abandon like those in Ephesus did?
- Because of so many people were coming to know Jesus and leaving their old religious practices behind, there was a growing societal & economic impact
 - As we pray for our society & economy, are we starting with praying for our neighbors who don't know Jesus?

Meditation Verse: *Acts 26:17b-18*