

# CHAPTER 19

## INTRODUCTION TO ACTS 19

**Ver. 1.** *And it came to pass that while Apollos was at Corinth*, etc.]

Whither he came after the Apostle Paul, and where he watered what the apostle had planted, and where he became very famous and eminent; insomuch that he was set up, though not with his will, at the head of a party, in opposition to the chief of the apostles, Peter and Paul; (see ~~ROM~~ 1 Corinthians 1:12 3:4-6, 4:6).

*Paul having passed through the upper coasts*; that is, of Phrygia, Galatia, Pontus, Bithynia, Lydia, Lycaonia, and Paphlagonia;

*came to Ephesus*; into Ionia, of which Ephesus was the chief city, and lay near the sea; wherefore the other countries are called the upper coasts; hither he came, according to his promise in (~~ACTS~~ Acts 28:21)

*And finding certain disciples*; such as believed in Christ, made a profession of him, and had been baptized in his name, for such were commonly called disciples: these do not seem to be persons, who were either converted by Paul, when he was at Ephesus before, or by Apollos, who had been there since, and was gone; but rather some who came hither from other parts, since the apostle was at this place; though indeed his stay at Ephesus before was so short, that they might be here, and he not hear of them, or meet with them.

**Ver. 2.** *He said unto them, have ye received the Holy Ghost*, etc.]

Meaning, not the special regenerating and sanctifying grace of the Holy Ghost, for that is supposed in their being disciples and believers, but the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, for it follows,

*since ye believed?* that is, in Christ; which is taking it for granted, that they had received the special grace of the Spirit of God; for this believing is to be understood of true, spiritual, special faith in Christ:

*and they said unto him, we have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost*; by which they could not mean the person of the Holy

Ghost: for they must have known that there was such a divine person as the Holy Ghost, from the writings of the Old Testament, with which they were conversant: and from the ministry of John, into whose baptism they were baptized; who saw the Spirit of God descend on Jesus, and bore witness of it; and declared, that Christ who was to come after him, would baptize with the Holy Ghost: nor could they mean the special grace of the Spirit, which they themselves had received; but the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit of God, which they at present knew nothing of, and which were afterwards bestowed upon them: they knew that there were prophecies in the Old Testament, concerning the effusion of the Spirit in the last days, in the days of the Messiah; but they had not heard that these had had their accomplishment; they had heard nothing of the day of Pentecost, and of the pouring out of the Spirit upon the apostles then, nor of any instance of this kind since; they did not know that the Holy Ghost was yet, (~~John~~ John 7:39) they knew he was promised, but not that he was given; the Ethiopic version, to avoid the difficulty of the text, renders it, “we have only heard that there was an Holy Ghost”.

**Ver. 3.** *And he said unto them, unto what then were ye baptized?* etc.] The apostle takes it for granted that they were baptized, since they were not only believers, but disciples; such as not only believed with the heart, but had made a profession of their faith, and were followers of Christ; but asks unto what they were baptized; either in whose name they were baptized, since Christian baptism was administered in the name of the Spirit, as well as in the name of the Father and of the Son; or what attended or followed their baptism, seeing sometimes the Holy Ghost fell upon persons, either before baptism, or at it, or after it:

*and they said, unto John's baptism;* some think they had never been baptized at all with water baptism, only had received the doctrine preached by John, concerning repentance and remission of sins, and so were baptized unto him, professing the same doctrine he did, just as the Israelites were baptized into Moses; others think they were baptized, but very wrongly, being baptized in the name of John, and not in the name of Jesus Christ; and so, as it was not Christian baptism they had submitted to, it was right to baptize them again: but neither of these are probable, for it is not likely that they should receive John's doctrine, and not his baptism; that they should be his disciples and followers, and not attend to the more distinguishing branch of his ministry; and it is still more unlikely that they should be baptized in his name, who preached Jesus Christ to his followers,

and pointed out to them the Lamb of God, and declared him to be greater than he; it seems rather that they were baptized, and that they were baptized in the name of Christ, as John's disciples were, as the apostle affirms in the following words.

**Ver. 4.** *Then said Paul*, etc.] In reply to their answer, understanding them that they were baptized by John, he takes it up, and gives an account of John's baptism: showing how agreeable it was, and that it was the same baptism with the baptism of Christ, being administered in his name:

*John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance*; which required repentance antecedent to it, and was a fruit and effect, and so an evidence of it:

*saying unto the people*; the people of the Jews, the common people, the multitude that attended on his ministry:

*that they should believe on him, which should come after him*, that is, on Jesus Christ; so that he preached faith in Christ, as well as repentance towards God; and made the one as well as the other a necessary prerequisite unto baptism; which shows, that his baptism and Christian baptism are the same.

**Ver. 5.** *When they heard this*, etc.] That is, the people to whom John preached, his hearers; when they heard of the Messiah, and that Jesus was he, and that it became them to believe in him:

*they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus*; not the disciples that Paul found at Ephesus, but the hearers of John; for these are the words of the Apostle Paul, giving an account of John's baptism, and of the success of his ministry, showing, that his baptism was administered in the name of the Lord Jesus; and not the words of Luke the Evangelist, recording what followed upon his account of John's baptism; for then he would have made mention of the apostle's name, as he does in the next verse; and have said, when they heard this account, they were baptized by Paul in the name of the Lord Jesus: the historian reports two things, first what Paul said, which lies in (~~4490~~ Acts 19:4,5) then what he did, (~~4496~~ Acts 19:6) where he repeats his name, as was necessary; as that he laid his hands upon them, which was all that was needful to their receiving the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, having been already baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus: which sense is the more confirmed by the particles  $\mu\epsilon\nu$  and  $\delta\epsilon$ , which answer to one another in verses 4 and 5, and show the words to be a continuation of

the apostle's speech, and not the words of the historian, which begin in the next verse. Beza's ancient copy adds, "for the remission of sins".

**Ver. 6.** *And when Paul had laid his hands upon them*, etc.] They having been before baptized, not by him, but by John, or one of his disciples, in the name of the Lord Jesus; just as Peter and John laid their hands upon the believing Samaritans, who had been before baptized by Philip, (~~4814~~ Acts 8:14-17) and the same extraordinary effects followed:

*the Holy Ghost came on them*; in his extraordinary gifts, whose special grace they had before an experience of:

*and they spake with tongues*; with other tongues, or in other languages, which they had never learned, or had been used to, as the disciples did at the day of "Pentecost": and prophesied; preached, having an extraordinary gift at once, of explaining the prophecies of the Old Testament, and also foretold things to come.

**Ver. 7.** *And all the men were about twelve*.] The Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, have not the word "about"; but affirm, that the men were twelve; and indeed the number being so small, the historian might be at a certainty about it: these seem to be the first materials of a Gospel church at Ephesus, which afterwards was very large and flourishing, and very likely were some of the elders of it.

**Ver. 8.** *And he went into the synagogue*, etc.] Of the Jews at Ephesus, for it seems to have been a private house, where he had met with the twelve baptized disciples, and had laid his hands on them; and these being Jews, as it seems most likely, by their having been baptized into John's baptism, the apostle went along with them to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his usual custom; having a very great desire, and an affectionate concern, for the welfare of his countrymen the Jews:

*and spake boldly for the space of three months*; that is, he used great freedom of speech, and showed much courage and intrepidity of mind, in preaching the Gospel at the synagogue every sabbath day as it returned, during this space of time; some manuscripts read, "three days":

*disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God*; the kingdom of the Messiah, the Gospel dispensation, the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel, and the Gospel church state, often signified by the kingdom of God, and of heaven, in Scripture; and concerning the glory

of a future state, the way and right unto it, and meetness for it; and these things he reasoned upon in such a strong and nervous manner, and made use of such powerful arguments, in proof and demonstration of them, as were very persuasive, and engaged many to believe them, and give their assent unto them.

**Ver. 9.** *But when divers were hardened and believed not*, etc.] For though some were affected with and convinced by the arguments the apostle used, others were but the more hardened and remained incredulous: for the Gospel, while it is the savour of life unto life to some, it is the savour of death unto death, to others; as the sun melts the wax, and hardens the clay:

*but spake evil of the way before the multitude*; the Syriac version and Beza's ancient copy read, "before the multitude of the Gentiles": the unbelieving Jews not only contradicted the Gospel preached by the apostle, but blasphemed it, and said all the evil things of it they could, and loaded it with reproaches, and charged it with all the bad consequences they could think of; and that publicly, before all the people, in order to prejudice them against it; for by "the way", is meant the doctrine of the Gospel, which the Vulgate Latin here reads, "the way of the Lord"; and so some copies; and two of Stephens's copies read, "the way of God", as does also the Syriac version; and the Arabic version, "the way of faith"; and the Ethiopic version, "the doctrine"; the doctrine, which shows the way of God's salvation by Jesus Christ:

*he departed from them*; the hardened, unbelieving, and blaspheming Jews, as being unworthy of the means of grace; he went out of their synagogue, and no more entered there: and separated the disciples; from them, the twelve disciples he had laid his hands on, and others who in this space of time, the space of three months, had been converted under his ministry; these he formed into a separate Gospel church state, as well as engaged them to quit the company and conversation of these blasphemers, and no more attend with them in their synagogue, that so they might not be infected and corrupted by them; a separation from such who contradict and blaspheme the truths and ordinances of the Gospel, is justifiable:

*disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus*: which was either built by him, and so went by his name, or which one of this name possessed, and made use of; for it seems to be the proper name of a man, and so the Syriac version renders it, "whose name was Tyrannus"; though by others it is taken to be an appellative, and to design some great person, who

patronised the apostle, and in whose house he taught; the word “tyrant”, being formerly used for a king, a prince, or nobleman; and so the Arabic version renders it, “in the dwelling house of one of the great men”; the chief of Asia, that were his friends, (~~4198~~ Acts 19:31) and so the Ethiopic version, “and he taught daily before the court and the governors”: some copies read “Tyrannius”; mention is made of a philosopher whose name was “Tyrannion”, who was so called, because he vexed and disturbed those that were brought up in the same school with him <sup>f967</sup>; this man it seems was a schoolmaster; there was one of his name a bishop of Tyre, a martyr under Dioclesian; and another whose name was Tyrannus, bishop of Antioch <sup>f968</sup>; Beza’s ancient copy, and one of Stephens’s, add, “from the fifth hour to the tenth”; as if he spent five hours in public teaching every day, and rest in his trade and devotion.

**Ver. 10.** *And this continued by the space of two years*, etc.] Reckoning from the end of the three months, which had been spent in teaching in the synagogue:

*so that all they which dwelt in Asia*; in the lesser Asia, called the proconsular Asia, of which Ephesus was the chief city:

*heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks*; these, as they came to Ephesus, whether on account of religion, the Asiatic Jews to their synagogue, and the Greeks or Gentiles to the famous temple of Diana, or on account of trade and business, or for the sake of seeing this place, had the opportunity of hearing the Apostle Paul preach, concerning the person, offices, and grace of Christ; and dispute and reason concerning the more abstruse and difficult points of the Christian religion, in the above school, for two years together; so that the word of the Lord went out from hence, and was spread in all the cities and towns in Asia.

**Ver. 11.** *And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul.*] For the confirmation of the doctrine which he preached, and of his mission, as an apostle; and these were not any sort of miracles, common and vulgar ones, and much less things of chance, and what were merely accidental, as the word may signify; but they were rare and uncommon ones, and in which there was a visible display of the power of God; to whom as the efficient cause they are ascribed, the apostle being only an instrument God made use of.

**Ver. 12.** *So that from his body were brought unto the sick*, etc.] The Ethiopic version renders it, “from the extremity”, or “border of his garment”; and the Syriac version, “from the garments which were upon his body”; were brought and put upon the sick; that is, of the clothes which the apostle wore, some of them were taken and carried to sick persons, and used by them: particularly “handkerchiefs” or “aprons”; the former were such as he might use to wipe his face with, and remove sweat, or any filth from the body; and the latter, what he might wear as a mechanic, when working at his trade:

*and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them*; who were afflicted and possessed with them; these were some of the special and uncommon miracles wrought by the hands of the apostle, and which were wrought in an uncommon way; and which most clearly showed that they were wrought by a divine power.

**Ver. 13.** *Then certain of the vagabond Jews*, etc.] Who strolled about from place to place, pretending to tell fortunes, cure diseases by charms, and dispossess devils by conjuration, and therefore are called as follows,

*exorcists*; such there were among the Jews, as Justin Martyr observes <sup>f969</sup>, who adjured by the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: these

*took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits, the name of the Lord Jesus*; they imitated the Apostle Paul, and attempted to do as he did, using the same: name; hoping to get money or applause, or both, in this way; and it may be observed, that there were some who really did cast out devils in the name of Christ, who did not belong to him, (~~4072~~Matthew 7:22, ~~4088~~Mark 8:38)

*Saying, we adjure you by Jesus, whom Paul preacheth*; that is, to come out the bodies of those men which they had possessed: and the Jews made use of the name of Jesus for healing diseases; for it is said of one <sup>f970</sup>, that

“he swallowed something which almost choked him, and one came, and muttered to him in the name of Jesus ben Pandira, and he was well”

The Alexandrian copy, Beza’s ancient one, and others, the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions, read, “I adjure you”, etc.

**Ver. 14.** *And there were seven sons of one Sceva a Jew*, etc.] Who strolled about the country, and used exorcisms: and

*chief of the priests*; that were at Ephesus; not the high priest of the Jews, for he would have been at Jerusalem, and not at Ephesus; though indeed it does not necessarily follow from the words, that Sceva himself was there, only his seven sons: however, no such name appears in the catalogue of the Jewish high priests, nor is it reasonable to think, that seven sons of an high priest should follow such a vagabond course of life: Beza's ancient copy only calls him "a priest"; and the Alexandrian copy reads his name, Scuta, and the Ethiopic version omits it; it is the same with *hawks*, and signifies a spectator, or observer; see the Targum on (~~1034~~ 2 Samuel 13:34, ~~2206~~ Isaiah 21:6).

*which did so*; adjured the devils in the name of Jesus, to come out; at least they did so in one case, as follows.

**Ver. 15.** *And the evil spirit answered and said*, etc.] The Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, add, "to them"; to the seven sons of Sceva:

*Jesus I know*; to be the Son of God and Messiah, and own that he has power of dispossessing spirits, of which there were many instances in the days of his flesh:

*and Paul I know*; and own to be a servant of the most high God, by whom miracles of this kind have been wrought:

*but who are ye?* you are not the disciples of Jesus, nor the servants of God, but the children of the devil, and have no power over us, but on the other hand are subject to us.

**Ver. 16.** *And the man in whom the evil spirit was*, etc.] Being agitated by him:

*leapt upon them*; with great agility and force, and laid hold on them, and struggled with them, and beat and wounded them, and stripped them naked:

*and overcame them, and prevailed against them*; the Alexandrian copy, Beza's most ancient one, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version read, "and overcame both"; as if only two of these seven sons had made



this attempt, and were so used; though the Ethiopic version reads, “and overcame them all”; all the seven sons:

*so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded*; having their clothes tore off, and their bodies beat and bruised.

**Ver. 17.** *And this was known to all the Jews*, etc.] These men being Jews: and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus: for though it was done in a private house, yet there might be many spectators and witnesses, both Jews and Greeks, who spread this fact about the city, and who, were to be depended upon:

*and fear fell on them all*; on the enemies of Christ and his Gospel, so that others were deterred from making such an attempt for the future:

*and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified*; which had such power over evil spirits, and whose power they themselves acknowledged: this was done by them that believed in Christ, who thought and spake the more highly of him; and who more strongly believed in him, and so magnified him, and gave more glory to him; Christ is great in himself, and he is magnified and made great, when he is declared to be so, and is treated as such.

**Ver. 18.** *And many that believed*, etc.] In Jesus Christ, whose name was spoken of with great respect, and which spread fear in every person:

*came*; to the apostle:

*and confessed*; their sins; and acknowledged what a wicked life they had led:

*and showed their deeds*; their former evil deeds, which they had been guilty of; one copy reads, “their sins”; (see <sup>4016</sup>Matthew 3:6).

**Ver. 19.** *Many also of them which used curious arts*. etc.] Magic arts, soothsaying, necromancy, conjuration, and the like, being convinced of the folly and wickedness of them:

*brought their books together*; by which they had learned these arts; Ephesus was famous for this sort of learning; here Apollonius Tyaneus, in the beginning of Nero’s reign, opened a school and taught magic, and such like things: frequent mention is made of the Ephesian letters, which were

no other than enchantments; and even Diana, the goddess of the Ephesians, is said to be a magician<sup>f971</sup>:

*and burned them before all men*; to show their detestation of them, and the truth and genuineness of their repentance for their former sins; and that these books might not be a snare to them for the future, nor be made use of by others:

*and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver*; which is thought to answer to one thousand five hundred sixty two pounds and ten shillings of our money; reckoning a piece of silver, an Attic drachma; for such might be the silver pieces at Ephesus, a city of Greece, and which was of the value of our money seven pence halfpenny; but if Luke meant by pieces of silver, shekels, according to the Jewish way, (see Gill on “<sup>4065</sup>Matthew 26:15”) then the sum is much larger, for a shekel was about two shillings and six pence of our money; so that fifty thousand pieces of silver, amount to six thousand two hundred and fifty pounds; a large sum indeed for magic books! some manuscripts read “gold” instead of “silver”, which must greatly increase the value.

**Ver. 20.** *So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed.*] Over conjuring books, conjurers themselves, yea, even the devils; the power of God going along with it, many were converted; which is meant by the increase of it, and were delivered from the power of darkness, out of the hands of Satan, and translated into the kingdom of Christ. Beza’s ancient copy reads, the “faith” of God; and the Syriac version, “faith in God”.

**Ver. 21.** *After these things were ended*, etc.] After that the apostle had disputed with the Jews in their synagogue, for the space of three months, and in the school of Tyrannus about two years; and after many souls had been converted at Ephesus, and were formed into a church state, and were established in the faith:

*when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia*: in the former of which were the cities of Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea, and in the latter, Corinth; where the apostle had already been, and preached the Gospel with success, and had laid the foundation of a Gospel church state in each place; but was willing to visit them again, both to confirm them in the doctrines of the Gospel, and, if it was the will of God, that he might be the instrument of converting others, and adding them to them, as well as to make some

collections among them, for the poor saints at Jerusalem: for through these places he intended

*to go to Jerusalem*; to visit the church there, and distribute to the poor what he had gathered, or should gather for them among the Gentile churches:

*saying, after I have been there, I must also see Rome*; the metropolis of the empire, and the glory of the whole world; and which to see was one of Austin's three wishes: but the apostle's desire was not so much to see the magnificence of the city, as the saints in it; and that he might impart some spiritual gift unto them, and have some fruit among them; and be a means of quickening and comforting them, and of gaining others to them; and it was the will of God that he should go there; and this he spake by a prophetic spirit, and as being under the impulse of the Spirit of God; (see <sup><421></sup>Acts 23:11).

**Ver. 22.** *So he sent into Macedonia*, etc.] To Philippi, or Thessalonica, or Berea, or some of the places there, to let them know of his coming, and to prepare for him:

*two of them that ministered unto him*; that were his assistants in preaching the Gospel:

*Timotheus and Erastus*; the former of these was a disciple he found at Lystra, and took along with him, and to whom he afterwards wrote two epistles; and the latter seems to be the same with him, who was chamberlain of the city of Corinth, and is said to abide there, ( <sup><563></sup>Romans 16:23, <sup><540></sup>2 Timothy 4:20) The Ethiopic version, instead of Erastus, wrongly reads Aristarchus; whereas it is certain, he was not sent into Macedonia, but was with the apostle at Ephesus in the tumult, ( <sup><442></sup>Acts 19:29).

*But he himself stayed in Asia for a season*; that is, at Ephesus, as the following narration shows.

**Ver. 23.** *And the same time there arose no small stir about that way*.] The Syriac version reads, "the way of God"; and the Vulgate Latin version, "the way of the Lord": that is, the Christian religion, and the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel, which the saints were directed to walk in; and the Ethiopic version renders it, "about this doctrine"; which mightily grew and prevailed, and which such numbers embraced; and how great the stir

was about it, and from whence it arose, who began it, and what were the consequences of it, are hereafter related.

**Ver. 24.** *For a certain man, named Demetrius, a silversmith,* etc.] Who worked in silver, not in coining silver money, but in making silver vessels, in melting silver, and casting it into moulds, and forming it into different shapes; and particularly,

*which made silver shrines for Diana;* who Diana was, (see Gill on ~~“Acts 19:27”~~), these were not coins or medals of silver, struck by Demetrius, with the figure of the temple of Diana on them, nor images of Diana, as the Ethiopic version reads; but they were chaplets, or little temples made of silver, in imitation of the temple of Diana at Ephesus, with her image included in it; the words may be rendered, “silver temples”: in some manuscripts it is added, “like little chests”: which being sold to the people,

*brought no small gain to the craftsmen:* who were of the same trade with him; masters of the same business, who employed others under them, as appears by what follows.

**Ver. 25.** *Whom he called together,* etc.] That is, the craftsmen; “all his co-artificers”, as the Syriac version reads, all the chief of the trade, the masters of it, as he himself was:

*with the workmen of like occupation;* who were employed by him, and the rest of the masters in the several branches of the business; as founders, engravers, polishers, etc. some might make the images, and others the temples, or shrines; some do one part and some another, so that abundance of persons might be employed in this business:

*and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth;* the workmen not only had a comfortable and sufficient livelihood, but the masters of the trade grew rich: such a demand had they for their goods, and so profitable was this craft to them: this was a very strong and moving argument, to influence the masters and workmen; it so nearly touched them, and their worldly interest, than which nothing sticks closer to carnal men.

Demetrius’s way of address was very moving and persuasive, but his method manifestly betrayed what was his greatest concern, not religion, but his own secular interest; that which he should have mentioned last, if at all, he begins with: self is the leading and governing principle in a natural man.

**Ver. 26.** *Moreover, ye see and hear*, etc.] Demetrius appeals to their senses of seeing and hearing; they saw what was done in their own city, and they had heard how things were elsewhere; they might believe what they saw with their eyes, and they had reason to depend upon the report which was brought to their ears:

*that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people*; by “all Asia” is meant Ionia, that part of Asia, of which Ephesus was the metropolis; from whence great multitudes came to Ephesus, and heard Paul in the school of Tyrannus, (<sup><4190></sup>Acts 19:10) so that not only many in the city of Ephesus, but even in almost every city and town of Asia, had heard and received the Gospel preached by Paul; of whom Demetrius speaks very contemptibly, as if he was a worthless vagabond fellow, who had the art of persuading and deluding people; he prevailed upon them to believe in Christ whom he preached, and turned away much people from the worshipping of idols, to the living God:

*saying, that they be no gods which are made with hands*; such as was their Diana, and the images of her, which these workmen made; and consequently if his doctrine prevailed, as it had much already, their trade would be worth nothing, and their livelihood be lost, which was the grand thing they had in view; for one would think they could never believe themselves, that the images they made were really gods; but whether they did or not, certain it is, that the apostle’s doctrine was true, that such could not be gods, and which agrees both with reason and revelation.

**Ver. 27.** *So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought*, etc.] Or “to come into reproof”, as the words may be literally rendered, and as they are in the Vulgate Latin version; that is, if this notion prevails, that they are not gods, which are made with hands, this art and business of making shrines and images for Diana will be brought into contempt, and come to nothing; who will buy them, when once they believe there is no divinity in them? they will despise them, and the makers of them; yea, the latter will be in danger of being taken up, and charged, convicted, reprovèd and punished as idolaters, and blasphemers of deity; to which sense the Ethiopic version inclines, which renders it, “and not only for this thing we shall be in danger”; of being called to an account for making these shrines; our business will be put down, and we shall be treated with disgrace, if not with severity:

*but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised;* here religion is pretended, and a concern shown for that; partly on purpose to cover, as much as could be, the selfish and avaricious principles from which Demetrius acted; and partly the more to stir up the meaner and more ignorant sort of people, and irritate and provoke them, and set them against Paul and his doctrine, who generally speaking are the most bigoted. Diana is said to be the daughter of Jupiter, by Latona; she is often called the goddess of hunting, and is said to preside at births; the moon was worshipped by the Heathens under her name; she is here called the “great” goddess, for the Gentiles had their greater and their lesser gods, and she is reckoned among the former, which were in number twelve; Juno, Vesta, Minerva, Ceres, Diana, Venus, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Neptune, Vulcan, and Apollo: the temple of Diana at Ephesus is reckoned among the seven wonders of the world; it was about seven furlongs distant from the city <sup>f972</sup>, and was 425 feet long, and 220 feet broad, and had in it 127 pillars, 60 feet high; it was built on marshy ground, that it might not be affected with earthquakes; and yet that such a pile of building might not stand upon a slippery and unstable foundation, coals and fleeces of wool were laid in the foundation and trodden in it, according to Pliny <sup>f973</sup>, from whom this account is taken; who says it was two hundred and twenty years in building, and elsewhere he says it was four hundred years; the architect who first began it, he makes to be one Chersiphron; but it is commonly ascribed to the Amazons, and particularly to the Amazon Otrira, the wife of Mars; though Pausanias <sup>f974</sup>, as he observes that the temple of Diana of the Ephesians was built before the Ionians came into these parts, so he denies that it was built by the Amazons, but affirms that the builders of it were Cresus, and Ephesus, the son of Caystrus. Solinus <sup>f975</sup>, who calls it a fabric of the Amazons, says it was

“so magnificent, that Xerxes, when he burnt all the temples in Asia, spared this only; but (adds he) this clemency of Xerxes did not preserve the sacred temple from evil; for Herostratus set fire to this noble fabric with his own hands, for no other reason, as he confessed, than to get himself a name.”

At which the Ephesians were so enraged, that they got an order published by the common council of Asia, throughout all the neighbouring kingdoms and nations, that his name should not be once mentioned <sup>f976</sup>; which however, though it might be regarded for a while, was not always; for his name has since been both spoken of, and transmitted in writing to

posterity. The above historian observes, that the temple at Ephesus was burnt, the same day in which Alexander was born at Pella; which occasioned Timaeus facetiously to say, as is related by Cicero<sup>f977</sup>

“it is no wonder that the temple of Diana of the Ephesians should be burnt the same night that Alexander was born, seeing Diana, being desirous to be present at the delivery of Olympias, (the mother of Alexander,) was absent from her own house.”

However, the inhabitants of Ephesus being very rich, and also willing to communicate to the charge of rebuilding this edifice, the women even bringing their gold, silver, and other precious ornaments, the work was set about, and a fabric was raised much more beautiful than the former; the name of the architect by whom it was rebuilt was Dinocrates; and so it continued, to this time the apostle was at Ephesus, a very fine and grand building, and commanded great attention, veneration, and respect from men; and which Demetrius suggests would fall into contempt, through the doctrine of the apostle, should he be suffered to go on:

*and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth*; by “her magnificence” is meant, her deity; which must be denied her, as well as her temple despised, if Paul’s doctrine was true, and should obtain; so the Syriac version renders it, “the goddess herself”; and the Ethiopic version, “her divinity”: what Demetrius says of her, that she was worshipped by all Asia, and the world, was fact; not only all Asia was concerned in building her temple at Ephesus, as many writers affirm<sup>f978</sup>; but she was one of the highest class of deities, and received as such by the whole Gentile world; yea, Diana of the Ephesians, as distinguished from all other Dianas, was revered by all nations. There were temples of Diana of the Ephesians in other places, particularly at Corinth, as Pausanias relates; and who also affirms, that all the cities celebrate Diana of the Ephesians, and men in private honour her above other deities; the reasons are, the glory of the Amazons, from whom according to fame her image was, and because of the antiquity of the temple: three other things besides these, adds he, contribute to the glory of it; the magnificence of the temple, which exceeds whatever was done by man, and the splendour of the city of the Ephesians, and the renown of the deity in it<sup>f979</sup>: here the silversmith suggests the catholicism and universality of their religion, in favour of it.

**Ver. 28.** *And when they heard these sayings*, etc.] Both the masters and the workmen;

*they were full of wrath*; against Paul and his doctrine:

*and cried out, saying, great is Diana of the Ephesians*; this goddess is frequently called in Heathen writers, Diana of the Ephesians, or the Ephesian Diana, because of her famous temple at Ephesus; and to distinguish her from all other Dianas: Pausanias makes mention of sixty Dianas at least, and yet seems not to have taken notice of them all; all of them had different epithets, by which they were distinguished from one another; the images were in different shapes, and they were worshipped with different rites: what seems most of all to distinguish the Ephesian Diana from others, is her having many paps; hence she is called, “multi mammia”; so Minutius Felix observes <sup>f980</sup>, that Diana is sometimes girt about on high as an huntress, and the Ephesian Diana is “mammis multis & uberibus extracta”; Just as the Isis of the Egyptians, which, Macrobius <sup>f981</sup> says, signifies the earth; hence the whole body of the deity is covered with paps, because the whole universe is nourished by it: the priest of Diana of the Ephesians was an eunuch, and was obliged to abstain from all company; neither bathed, nor ate, nor drank with others, nor might he enter into the house of a private person; there was a feast kept every year in honour of her, at which young men in the flower of their age, and virgins well dressed, used to go to the temple in great pomp, keep the feast, and marry with each other. The temple was a sort of an asylum, as Heathen temples commonly were; and it had this particular privilege, that those that fled to it were freed from servitude <sup>f982</sup>. This goddess is called “great”, agreeably to her name, for, *anyd*, “Diana”, signifies “great” and venerable; because of her birth, being the daughter of Jupiter; and because of her great service, she was supposed to be of in assisting at births; and because of her magnificent temple and worship; and because she was worshipped by great persons: and here greatness is ascribed unto her, and a loud cry made of it, to animate one another, to gather a mob together, and to incense them and stir them up against the apostle and his companion: in the Arabic version, instead of Diana, it is Venus, both here and elsewhere, but wrongly.

**Ver. 29.** *And the whole city was filled with confusion*, etc.] For the workmen that made the silver shrines very likely ran up and down in the city, crying out, great is Diana of the Ephesians, which brought the people out of their houses to inquire what was the matter; and the mob gathering and increasing, as they went along, threw the whole city into confusion and disorder:



*and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia;* the latter of these was of Thessalonica in Macedonia, as appears from (~~400b~~ Acts 20:4) but of what place the former was, is not certain; however, being a Macedonian, he could not be the Gaius of Derbe, mentioned in the same place, nor the Gaius of Corinth, (~~401b~~ 1 Corinthians 1:14) but some third person. They are both Greek names; Aristarchus signifies the chief of princes, or the prince of chiefs; and Gaius is a name taken from the joy of parents, and is the same with the Roman name, Caius; they are both reckoned among the seventy disciples; the former is said to be bishop of Apamea in Phrygia, and the latter Bishop of Ephesus; (see Gill on ~~400b~~ Luke 10:1")

*Paul's companions in travel;* whom he brought with him out of Macedonia, and who had been with him to Jerusalem and Antioch, and were now returned with him to Ephesus, where they had been with him for the space of two years, or more: it is very much that this mob had not seized on Paul himself: it may be Paul was within doors, and these were without in the streets, and so were laid hold upon and carried away in a most forcible and violent manner by them: who having got them,

*they rushed with one accord into the theatre;* where the public plays were acted in honour of the goddess Diana, and where, among other things, men were set to fight with wild beasts; and very likely the intention of the mob, in hurrying Paul's companions thither, was to throw them to the wild beasts. A theatre is a spectacle or show, so called, because in them fights were shown, plays were acted, games exercised, and battles fought between men and men, and between men and beasts, and between beasts and beasts; concerning which, take the following account <sup>f983</sup>:

“Theatre, among the ancients, is a public edifice for the exhibiting of scenic spectacles, or shows to the people — under the word theatre was comprehended not only the eminence, whereon the actors appeared, and the action passed, but also the whole area, or extent of the place common to the actors and spectators: in this sense the theatre was a building encompassed with porticos, and furnished with seats of stone, disposed in semicircles, and ascending gradually over one another, which encompassed a space called the “orchestra”; in the front whereof was the “proscenium” or “pulpitum”, whereon the actors performed the “scena”, a large front adorned with orders of architecture; behind which was

“postscenium”, or the place where the actors made themselves ready, retired, etc. so that the “scena”, in its full extent, comprehended all the part belonging to the actors. In the Greek theatres, the “orchestra” made a part of the “scena”; but in the Roman theatres, none of the actors ever descended into the “orchestra”, which was taken up by the seats of the senators.”

For the better understanding the terms used, and the several parts of the theatre, let it be observed, that the “scena”, according to others<sup>f984</sup> was the place from whence the actors first went out; and it reached from one corner of the theatre to the other, and was threefold; “tragical”, which was adorned in a royal manner with pillars and signs; “comical”, which represented private buildings; and “satirical”, which exhibited trees, caves, mountains, etc. Likewise, the “scena” was either “versile”, when on a sudden the whole scene was turned by some machines; or “ductile”, when by drawing away the boards the inward face of the scene appeared, or by drawing curtains. The “proscenium” was a place lower than the scene, in which the actors chiefly spoke and acted: the “postscenium” was a place in which these things were done, which could not be done fitly, and with decorum in the scenes: the “pulpitum” was a higher place in the “proscenium”, in which those that recited stood: the “orchestra” was the last place, in which they danced, and near which the senators sat. Tarquinius Priscus was the first who introduced plays among the Romans; and the temple of Bacchus at Athens was the first theatre in the world, the remains of which are still to be seen. Of this theatre at Ephesus I have not met with any account; whether it was in the temple, or without, is not certain; very likely it might be a part of it, or adjoin unto it.

**Ver. 30.** *And when Paul would have entered in unto the people*, etc.] In the theatre, in order to have preached to the people, and to have removed their prejudices against him, and the Gospel preached by him, and to have shown them the error and evil of their idolatrous ways and worship, and to have reconciled them to him, and his friends, and to have persuaded them to do them no hurt; which shows the apostle’s greatness of soul, his firmness, constancy, and intrepidity, and his great concern and affection for his companions, to risk his life in this manner: but

*the disciples suffered him not*; the believers, the members of the church at Ephesus would by no means agree to it, but dissuaded him from it; who hereby, on their part, showed great love to him, and what a value they had

for him, and how much they esteemed the life of so great an apostle, and faithful preacher of the Gospel. The Ethiopic version renders it, “the apostles prohibited him”; but there were none of that office with him.

**Ver. 31.** *And certain of the chief of Asia*, etc.] Or the Asiarchs; these were not princes of Asia, rulers or governors of provinces, or cities, or civil magistrates; but priests who presided over the games and diversions at the theatre, and had the management and command of things there. Such an one was Philip the Asiarch, the church of Smyrna makes mention of in their account of the sufferings and martyrdom of Polycarp<sup>f985</sup>, whom the people entreated that he would send out the lion to Polycarp; that is, out of the theatre which he had the command of; but he replied he could not do it, because he had finished the theatrical exercises: from whence it appears that he was the governor of the theatre, and had his title of Asiarch from thence, as these men had, wherefore this word should not be rendered, the “princes of Asia”, as by the Vulgate Latin; nor the “chief of Asia”, as by the Syriac and Arabic versions, and by ours, but rather the “Asian priests”. The Ethiopic version not knowing who should be meant by them, only reads, “and some of Asia”.

*Which were his friends*; they had a good opinion of the apostle, and a good liking of his doctrines, and wished well to his person, and were concerned for his safety; though they might not have been really converted, and truly disciples, as those in the preceding verse; for otherwise one would think they would have relinquished their office and place. These

*sent unto him*, messengers or letters,

*desiring him that he would not adventure himself into the theatre*; they observed to him the danger he would expose himself to, and entreated he would show a greater regard to his life than to risk it in such a manner, a life might be so useful to many; and though they were the governors at the theatre, yet such was the rage and fury of the mob, that it was not in their power to restrain them from doing mischief, till such time as they were appeased.

**Ver. 32.** *Some therefore cried one thing, and some another*, etc.] Not in the church at Ephesus among the disciples, and friends of the apostle, as if they were divided in their sentiments about his going into the theatre, some being for it, and others against it; but the people that were gathered

together in the theatre, these were not agreed about the reason of this tumult, some said it was on account of one thing, and some another:

*for the assembly was confused*; the multitude of people that were gathered together were made up of different persons, of different employments and sentiments, and were in no manner of form or order:

*and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together*; there was a noise and a hubbub in the city; but what was the reason and meaning of it, they were ignorant of; they were got together into the theatre in great numbers, but what was to be done there they knew not. And this is too often the case in religious assemblies, that the majority, at least many, can give no account of the reason, end, and design of their assembling together.

**Ver. 33.** *And they drew Alexander out of the multitude*, etc.] Or “some of the multitude brought forth Alexander”; into the theatre, in order to kill him, by casting him to the wild beasts. Some think this is the same with Alexander the coppersmith, who apostatized upon this danger he was exposed to, and became a blasphemer, and a great enemy of the apostle, and did him much evil, (<sup><500></sup>1 Timothy 1:20, <sup><504></sup>2 Timothy 4:14). This man, though his name was a Greek name, yet was a Jew, as is expressed in (<sup><488></sup>Acts 19:34) and from the times of Alexander the great, who was at Jerusalem, this name became common among the Jews; (see Gill on <sup><406></sup>Acts 4:6”).

*The Jews putting him forward*; being equally enemies to him, as being under a profession of Christianity, as the Heathens were; or as the Syriac version reads, “the people of the Jews”, that were there, out of themselves, pitched upon him as a proper person to still the uproar; and they brought him out of the multitude, to a convenient place, where he might be heard; and they the rather were forward to this, that he might lay all the blame of this confusion and uproar upon Paul and his companions, whom the Jews had an aversion to, as well as the Gentiles:

*and Alexander beckoned with the hand*; for silence, that he might be heard:

*and would have made his defence unto the people*; which looks as if he was a Christian, or at least was charged with being one, and was in danger of his life on that account; and therefore was desirous of being heard, that he might make an apology for the Christians, or remove such an imputation from himself, if he was not.

**Ver. 34.** *But when they knew that he was a Jew*, etc.] And so equally an enemy to their idolatry, as Paul and his companions were, whether he was a Christian or not.

*All with one voice about the space of two hours cried out*; all that were in the theatre lift up their voices at once to prevent Alexander's apology, or at least its being heard; and which they continued about two hours, which was a long time to keep hallooing out,

*great is Diana of the Ephesians*; (see Gill on "~~418B~~Acts 19:28").

**Ver. 35.** *And when the town clerk had appeased the people*, etc.] Caused them to cease their loud outcry, so as that he could be heard. This person seems to have been more than a "town clerk", as we render it; or a common "scribe", as the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions render it; rather as the Syriac version, "a chief man of the city"; the Septuagint interpreters in (~~418B~~Exodus 5:6) use the word for the Egyptian officers that were over the Israelites; and the Babylonians used to call the priest of <sup>f986</sup> Isis by this name; and according to some learned men, this man's office was to register the conquerors' names, and their rewards in the theatre; and who was chosen into this office by the people, and was a man of some considerable authority, as it is very apparent by what follows that this man was:

*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?* the word "Neocorus", translated "worshipper", signifies an officer in the temple, one that looked after it, beautified and adorned it; for "Neocorus" is from **κορῆω**, which signifies to beautify <sup>f987</sup>; though some etymologists would have the word to signify to sweep and clean, as if this officer was a sexton; rather, he answered to a churchwarden, and to this agrees the Syriac version; though this office belonged not to a single person, but to a city. Now to be a worshipper of Diana, was not peculiar to the city of Ephesus, as appears from (~~418C~~Acts 19:27) but to be Neocorus, a sacrist to the goddess, was a favour granted to some cities, and accounted a great honour; some had it twice, some thrice, some four times:

*and of the image which fell down from Jupiter*; or "of Diopetes"; so the Palladium, or image of Pallas, was called, because it was supposed to fall down from heaven, which Diomedes and Ulysses are said to take away from Troy; and here it seems to be something distinct from the goddess

Diana, and her image, and may design another deity worshipped along with her, and by them, since they make mention of more gods, (<sup>448B</sup>Acts 19:26). The Vulgate Latin version takes it to be the same with Diana, reading the words in connection with the preceding, “and the offspring of Jupiter”; she being said to be his daughter by Latona, as before observed; and the Ethiopic version understands it of her image, rendering them thus, “and of that molten image which was sent from Jupiter the great god”; and more expressly the Syriac version, which reads, “and of her image which fell from heaven”; and so was not made with the hands of men, and could not be objected to on that account, or denied to be a deity; and this the people might be the rather induced to believe, since it had been in the temple before the memory of any man. The Arabic version, reading these words in connection with the beginning of the next verse, gives a very different sense, “but neither indeed they that fell from heaven contradict the faith of this thing”; as if it was to be understood of the fallen angels, of which it can hardly be thought Demetrius had any knowledge. This image, Pliny says <sup>f988</sup>, it was doubted of what it was made; some said of the vine tree, others of ebony; but Athenagoras says, the old image of Diana of the Ephesians was made of olive <sup>f989</sup>.

**Ver. 36.** *Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against*, etc.] This officer intimates, in order to quiet the mob, and make them easy, that these things were so certain, and well known, that nobody would pretend to contradict them, and therefore they must be mistaken in the men, whom they had hurried into the theatre; it was impossible that they, or any men, should be capable of saying any thing against the truth of these things: therefore

*ye ought to be quiet and do nothing rashly*; to these men, to their hurt, but sit down, and compose yourselves, and think again, and consider of this matter, and not go into any hasty measures, which may, in the issue, be prejudicial to yourselves.

**Ver. 37.** *For ye have brought hither these men*, etc.] The Arabic version reads, “these two men”; that is, Gaius and Aristarchus, whom they had brought by force into the theatre to fight with wild beasts:

*which are neither robbers of churches*; or “temples”; or, as the Arabic version renders it, “robbers of the vessels of the temple”, sacrilegious persons; they have not stolen anything out of the temple of Diana, nor any other:

*nor yet blasphemers of your goddess*; they have not made mention of her name, much less said anything against her, at least this officer did not know that they had; and if he had, he did not stick to tell an officious lie to screen them, as did the Egyptian midwives in favour of the Hebrew women.

**Ver. 38.** *Wherefore if Demetrius, and the craftsmen which are with him,* etc.] Who were the ringleaders and encouragers of this tumult:

*have a matter against any man*; any accusation, or charge, any crime to accuse him of, and charge him with:

*the law is open*; or court days are kept; there are certain times fixed for the hearing and trying of causes, where and when such an affair should be regularly brought; and not use such disorderly methods, and throw a city into confusion, and break the peace as these men had done: the Syriac version renders it, “they are artificers”; that is, Demetrius and the craftsmen with him; they are tradesmen, and it does not belong to them, nor should they take upon themselves to judge and determine what is right or wrong:

*and there are deputies*; or “proconsuls”; the proconsul and his deputy, to whom such matters appertain, and who are judges in such cases, and to whom application should be made, and before whom such cases should be brought, and heard, and tried: the Syriac version reads in the singular number, “and there is a proconsul in the city”; a Roman governor and judge, whose province it is to determine such matters:

*let them implead one another*; let the plaintiff bring his accusation, and charge, and let the others defend themselves, and let things proceed in a due course of law, and so issue.

**Ver. 39.** *But if ye inquire anything concerning other matters,* etc.] Than what belongs to the craft and business of Demetrius, and the artificers:

*it shall be determined in a lawful assembly*; that is, called together according to law, and who have a right to hear, try, and judge causes, which such a confused lawless assembly as this in the theatre had not.

**Ver. 40.** *For we are in danger of being called in question,* etc.] Or are liable to be called to an account, reproved, and punished by the Roman proconsul, appointed over this city, or by the Roman emperor, or the Roman senate: for this day’s uproar; it being capable of being interpreted as a riot, tumult, and sedition:

*there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse:* or no reason can be assigned, why such a number of people should gather together; none can be given that will justify it, or that can be alleged in favour of it.

**Ver. 41.** *And when he had thus spoken,* etc.] Or delivered this oration, made use of the above arguments, reasonings, and expostulations:

*he dismissed the assembly;* he ordered them to break up, and every one to return home in peace, and go about his own business; and thus Paul, and his companions, were delivered from an imminent danger they were exposed to.