

## THE BOOK OF ACTS | GOD'S REVELATION OF TRANSITION

SESSION 63 ACTS 19:32-20:6

### ACTS 19:21-41 | THE THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY: EPHESUS, PART 4

- Verses 21-31: *see session 62*
- Verses 32-34 –
  - In the confusion, the crowd **drew Alexander out**.
    - He appears to be a spokesman for the Jews (note v. 34).
    - Some associate him with Alexander the Coppersmith of 1 Tim. 1:20, but there is only speculation to the possibility.
    - It appears to me that the Jews were at the center of this storm because Paul had been teaching of a Jewish Kingdom Gospel (see note, v. 23).
    - It is possible that Alexander was defending the Jewish synagogue *against* the kingdom message of Jesus as Messiah, distancing the Jews from Paul's message. If this is the case, the association with Alexander the Coppersmith begins to make sense.
  - The people would have nothing of it and for **two hours cried out** their praises to Diana.
- Verse 35 –
  - The **townclerk** is the γραμματεὺς [grammateus], that is, the *scribe* (as it is translated in all other occurrences). This clerk worked to calm the crowd by saying, in effect, "everyone knows that our town is Diana worshipers, there is nothing to worry about."
  - The word **worshipper** is literally, *temple-keeper*. This is the only time the Greek word νεοκόρος [neokoros] is used in the Scripture.
  - The words **of the image which fell down from Jupiter** are all translated from a single Greek word, διοπετής [diopetes], which is literally, "the god thing." The suffix *etes* (often translated *ites*) is an adjective forming suffix, just as "Israelites." The *diopetes* was an artifact in the ancient Temple to Diana.
- Verses 36-37 –
  - The **townclerk** continues with his "argument" that Diana worship is such an institution that nothing can bring it down. He makes this argument clear when he says, **these things cannot be spoken against**. That is, "this is incontrovertible truth." Of course, in hindsight his words are utter folly. When the clerk encouraged the men to **be quiet, and to do nothing rashly**, he was giving the worst advice that could be given (from the Artemis-worship point of view).
  - It is true that **these men** (Gaius and Aristarchus, v. 29) were **neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess** (v. 37), the townclerk was shortsighted in the threat to his way of life.
  - NOTE: Typically, Christian preachers would praise the townclerk *because he was helpful to their cause*. I think we ought to look at the townclerk's argument and say, "he harmed his very way of life all for the sake of peace," which is the most shortsighted means of thinking.
  - Further, note that when the townclerk speaks of **churches**, he is certainly *not* speaking of Christian churches. This displays the fact that *no theology should be built on the English use of the word church*. It is always a word that needs context. (Note: the Greek here is "robbers of temples," not the typical word, *ecclesia*).

- Verses 38-39 –
  - While the townclerk was shortsighted in his understanding of the threat to his way of life, he did correctly understand the rule of law, and the need for a civilized society to adhere to the rule of law. His message: *let the courts decide, not mob rule.*
- Verses 40-41 –
  - In the end, there is really not much difference in motivation from Demetrius and the townclerk: they are both just watching out for their own skin.
  - The selection of the word **concourse** by the KJV translators shows the precision at which they selected a corresponding English word. The Greek is συστροφή [sustrophe] which is *strephe* (to turn) and the prefix *sun* (here *sus*, “together”), thus *sustrophe* is “together with a turn.” The concept was “everyone turns in the same direction.” In English, the word **concourse** is *course* (the turns of a path) with the prefix *con*, which is “together with.” Thus the KJV translators selected a word that was as equal in structure as it was in meaning. The NASB, on the other hand, chose to translate *sustrophe* with the words “disorderly gathering,” which is far more interpretation than translation.
  - The word **assembly** is ἐκκλησία [ekkllesia], often translated “church”, giving further proof that the word must always be taken in context and not used to construct a doctrine. In Greek, this pagan gathering was a “church.”

#### ACTS 20:1-6 | THE THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY: MACEDONIA, GREECE, TROAS.

- Verses 1-3 –
  - Paul **embraced** the disciples at Ephesus (the modern versions say *exhorted*) and left for Macedonia, which required a ship across the Aegean Sea.
  - In Macedonia (which include Thessalonica, Philippi, and Berea), he **gave them much exhortation**, and then went to Greece (south of Macedonia), where he **abode three months**.
  - It appears that he planned on sailing to Syria (likely Antioch), but **the Jews laid wait for him** and so **he purposed to return through Macedonia**, which would be a longer journey.
- Verses 4-6 –
  - Because Paul had to return through Macedonia, it required a journey back through Asia.
  - In Macedonia he gathered (purposefully or circumstantially) several who **accompanied him**. The ones of whom we are familiar are **Tychicus** (see Eph. 6:21, Col. 4:7, 2 Tim. 4:12, and Tit. 3:12) and **Trophimus** (see Acts 21:29 and 2 Tim 4:20).
  - These went ahead while Paul remained during **the days of unleavened bread** (i.e.: Passover), then they all met in Troas (the port city in Asia) after a five-day journey, and they all remained in Troas for **seven days**.