

Acts of the Apostles

Week 25 – Acts 19:23-41; 20:1-16

The Riot in Ephesus (19:23-41)

- Demetrius, a silversmith who made shrines of the goddess Artemis, stirred up the other craftsmen against Paul.
 - o The Ephesians regarded Artemis as the guardian of their city.
 - o The temple to her was four times larger than the Parthenon and was counted as one of the seven wonders of the world.
 - o Demetrius and others made a successful living selling shrines related to the worship of the goddess (v 25).
 - o Demetrius saw Paul's preaching as a threat to his own ability to make a living and an affront to the pride and patriotism of all Ephesians (vv 26-27).
 - o The tradesmen stirred up the city with the patriotic slogan, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"
- A mob formed and seized two of Paul's travelling companions, Gaius and Aristarchus, hauling them off to the theater (v 29; the theater in Ephesus held 24,000 people).
 - o Paul wanted to address the crowd, but friends, including some city officials advised him to stay away (vv 30-31).
 - o The mob was not of one mind with most not even knowing why they were there (v 32).
 - o The Jews pushed a man named Alexander to the front probably to explain that Paul was not one of them even though he is Jewish (v 33).
 - o The plan backfired by stirring up anti-Jewish anger. The mob shouts patriotic slogans for two more hours (v 34).
- The city clerk quieted the crowd, knowing it would be his neck on the line if this turned into a full-blown riot that the Romans had to contain (vv 35-40).
 - o The clerk assured the people of Artemis's status and downplayed any trouble the Christians have caused.
 - o He encouraged Demetrius to bring charges through the proper channels (v 39).
 - o At the conclusion of his speech, he dismissed the crowd.

Through Macedonia and Greece (Acts 20:105)

- Three years prior, Paul had indicated that he wanted to return to Macedonia (see 19:21).
- Paul made a tour of the churches in the area encouraging the people there (v 2).
- A plot against his life, led him to change his plans to sail for Syria (and then likely on to Jerusalem), and instead backtrack through the same region (v 4).
- Paul travelled with a team that was representative of the success he had in his missionary work.
 - o Sopater was from Berea.

- Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica.
 - Aristarchus is mentioned in 19:29, 27:2, and Colossians 4:10 (as a “fellow prisoner.”)
- Gaius and Timothy from Derbe.
 - Timothy plays a major role in Paul’s ministry.
 - Gaius was a common name, and shows up in 19:29, Romans 16:23; 1 Corinthians 1:14, and 3 John 1:1.
- Tychicus and Trophimus from Asia.
 - Tychicus is mentioned as a “dear brother and faithful servant of the Lord” (Eph 6:21; Col 4:7) and someone Paul sent to do ministry on his behalf (2 Timothy 4:12; Titus 3:12).
 - Trophimus shows up in 21:29 as one of the Gentiles Paul is accused of taking into the Temple courts.
- This delegation may have accompanied the offering that Paul had collected for the believers in Jerusalem (1 Corinthians 16:1-4).

Paul Raises Eutychus from the Dead (20:7-11)

- The church started meeting for worship on the first day of the week (in commemoration of the resurrection) as opposed to the sabbath (v 7).
- Worship likely happened in the evening as people got off from work. In the ancient world, there was no single day off given to workers and no set time to finish the workday.
- While Paul was preaching, Eutychus sunk into a deep sleep, fell out a third story window, and died.
 - Eutychus’s name means “Lucky.”
 - He was likely a slave or servant who had worked all day. The smoke from the olive oil likely contributed to his drowsiness (v 8).
 - The text is clear that he died (v 9).
- Paul threw himself on the young man, took him in his arms, and declared, “Don’t be alarmed. He’s alive.”
 - The scene has echoes of Elijah (1 Kings 17:19-22) and Elishah (2 Kings 4:34-35).
 - There are also clear ties to Peter’s healing of Tabitha (9:36-42) and to Jesus’s raising of Jairus’s daughter (Matthew 9:24-25).
 - The young man, now alive, is restored to worship and to community (vv 11-12).
- Paul preached until daylight (v 11).

Sources

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