

Power to Witness in Word and Deed – Part 2

The Book of Acts

Acts 19:23–41

1. Review Acts 19:1–20. How has Paul’s two-year ministry of the gospel affected Ephesus, a city where the worship of false gods and goddesses was deeply entrenched? (v. 20)

Read Acts 19:23–27.

2. Who is Demetrius? (v. 24)

Who is Artemis (also known as Diana)? (vv. 24, 27, 35)

3. Demetrius stirs up his fellow craftsmen by claiming that Paul’s message will hurt their business, and therefore their income (vv. 25-26). Do you think Demetrius’s complaint against Paul in verse 26 is valid? Explain.
4. Why is Demetrius’s concern ironic? (Consider verse 26b.)
5. What further consequences of Paul’s message does Demetrius fear will happen? (v. 27)

Read Acts 19:28–34.

6. The craftsmen respond in fury to Demetrius’s concerns (v. 28). What impact does their anger have on the city? (vv. 29, 32)
7. The disciples and “[e]ven some officials of the province” (v. 31) stop him from appearing before the angry mob. Interestingly, these officials had “as part of their official duties...the task of enforcing the imperial cult, which involved all the citizens sprinkling incense before the statue of the emperor.”¹
What does Luke call these officials in verse 31?

What do you think it says about Paul that even these pagan officials are begging him not to endanger himself?

8. Why could the fact that Alexander is Jewish inflame the crowd even further? (Consider Exod. 20:3–5a.)

¹ Bruce Milne, *The Acts of the Apostles: Witnesses to Him...to the Ends of the Earth* (London: Christian Focus, 2010), 390.

Read Acts 19:35–41.

9. What four points does the city clerk make as he attempts to quiet the unruly crowd?

vv. 35–36

v. 37

vv. 38–39

v. 40

10. In his effort to restore peace, the city clerk affirms the worship of false gods but also gives protection to those who worship the one true God. Why do you think this tolerance could be a greater threat to the young church in Ephesus than the opposition of an angry crowd?

11. Imagine yourself as a new believer in first-century Ephesus. Jot down some descriptions of this culture from how it is portrayed in today's passage.

Consider what the city clerk declares as “fact” in verses 35-36. What challenges and temptations do you think you'd face? (📖 * Jer. 2:11-13)

12. What exclusive claims does God make that these new believers would need to cling to in this pagan culture?
Isa. 43:10-13; 44:6

Jn. 14:6

Jn. 17:3

Acts 4:12

1 Cor. 8:4-6

13. Like the Ephesians, we are immersed in a culture that encourages false worship.

a. What are some of the ways you see this in your daily life?

b. What has God provided to protect you from falling for the messages of our culture?

c. What are some ways to engage people so as to point them to the one true God who is able to free them from worthless idolatry? (Note that this can apply to our interactions with both unbelievers and believers!)

*The 📖 symbol indicates verses for further study.