

## **Acts 19:21-41 – The Gospel faces opposition**

### **Introduction**

- **19:8-10** – A church is established in Ephesus and reaches Asia.
- **19:17-19** – Revival destroys the grip of magic in Ephesus - “the dark citadel of evil”
- **19:20** – The Word grows and is effective.
- **19:21-22** – Paul plans to visit Rome and from there to reach Spain.

### **I. The Story**

- a) 19:23-27 - Disturbance** - Demetrius the silversmith is afraid that the influence of Paul’s teaching will undermine the greatness of the shrine of Diana/Artemis
- He is correct in that Paul’s message demands that people turn from idols to serve the living God (1Thessalonians 1:9-10).
  - He uses pious words but is motivated by greed.
- b) 19:28-34 – Danger** – this leads to a riot
- Fear leads to anger which results in violence (28-29).
  - Paul has made friends with the “*Asiarchs*” – a group of powerful Romans who represented the Establishment (30-31).
  - Chaos and disorder follows (32-34)
- c) 19:35-41 – Defence** – the highest official in the city defends them.
- They are innocent of any crime (37).
  - There is no charge that can be brought against them (38-40).
  - Peace is restored (41).

### **II. Four Lessons**

#### **a) Christians are good citizens**

- They did not break the law (37-38)
- **Romans 13:1-7** - They recognize that God has ordained the state.
- This is part of his “common grace” which has also ordained the church and the home.
- **Matthew 5:13-16; 1 Peter 2:12; Philippians 2:15** - We should be salt and light.
- There are occasions when Christians must disobey the law as a matter of conscience

#### **b) The Gospel changes society**

- **19:18-19** – the gospel threatened magic – it would threaten idolatry.
- Paul did not plan a crusade of protest – he preached the gospel and this changed people who then changed society. This is what happens in revival.

#### **c) The World is ambivalent to the church**

- **19:37-38** - The world sometimes supports the church.
- **19:29** – Sometimes the success of the church brings it under attack because it threatens vested interests and the status quo.
- Satan hates the church and tries to destroy it by persecution.

#### **d) God will defend his people**

- God will not allow his church to fail. He is sovereign and can use even a pagan official to defend his church.
- This is not a guarantee that the church will escape suffering – but when this comes, God will use it to build his church.