

***Letter to the EPHESIANS***  
***(Reintroduced)***

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*Sermon 2 Intro    Acts Ch 19 & various scriptures    07-05-2020*



***Paul is in Asia Minor... In the city of Ephesus..  
He is in the center of commerce where the Temple  
of Diana stands...***

***The Temple of Diana was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. It took 220 years to build it, having used some of the purest white marble in the world.***

***The Temple of Diana was its name to the Romans, and to the Greeks it was the Temple of Artemis.***

***The Temple was located on the beautiful harbor at Ephesus in Asia Minor, modern Turkey.***

***It was here that people came to worship the "virgin goddess" depicted with multiple breasts symbolizing her abundant fertility.***

***As you can see, there were 100 magnificent sculptured columns supporting the Temple.***

***According to tradition her image fell out of heaven like a bolt of lightning.***

***In correlation with this there been many archaeological discoveries with inscriptions from Ephesus calling her "Artemis the great". These inscriptions can be seen in the British Museum in London***

### ***Who was Artemis or Diana?***

***The supposed goddess of fertility***

### ***Who worshipped her?***

***She was probably the most worshiped deity in Asia and perhaps the world during Paul's time.***

### ***What was worship like?***

***Hundreds of eunuch priests, virgin priestesses, and religious prostitutes served the temple goddess.***

***Worship rituals were quite erotic to say it lightly.***

***By what other names were Diana and Artemis known?***

***"Queen of Heaven", "Savior", and "Mother Goddess"***

***What role did Ephesus have in this cult worship?***

***Ephesus was considered "neokoros" for the Temple of Diana,***

***In Greek antiquity, it is the guardian of a temple: Stated here is was a priestly officer of much dignity, having charge of the treasures dedicated in the temple.***

***It meant the city of Ephesus was the center for the worship of Diana and the city was its neokoros meaning Ephesus was responsible for maintaining the cult's purity of worship.***

***And where there is illicit sex legalized or is turned into an approved form of worship, there is always a pile of money to be grabbed..***

***The temple of Diana (or Artemis) brought great wealth to the citizens of***

***Ephesus because the temple of Artemis or Diana became the world's largest bank during that time.***

***What were Artemis festivals like?***

***Devotees came from all over the world to worship and celebrate during her festivals. Huge marches honored her statues.***

***Celebrations were held with music, dancing, singing, dramatic presentations, and chanting of allegiance.***

***The main statue in her temple may have been a black meteorite because she was said to have fallen from the sky from the great Olympus.***

*Olympus was known as the home of the twelve principal gods, identified in later ancient times with Mount Olympus in northern Greece.*

*Two statues of her have been found in the Prytaneion- being the "city hall" or the seat of government of Ephesus- indicating that she was considered to be the "basis for life in the city".*

*Maybe they could have used the current slogan  
What happens in Ephesus stays in Ephesus...*

*So what attracted the people to worship at the temple of Artemis (Diana)?*

*The promise of fertility, long life, sexual fulfillment, and protection during pregnancy and childbirth.*

*The temple at its core was built around sinful sexual worship.. A Sodom and Gomorrah in the New Testament.*

***The apostle John tells us do not love the world or the things in the world. Scripture tells us that sin presents itself in three areas...***

***Pp 2***

1 John 2:16-17

***For all that is in the world—***

- the desires of the flesh and
- the desires of the eyes and
- the pride of life—
- 

***Ephesus had hit the trifecta claiming ownership of all three...The sinful desires of the world were them worship and they were enjoying all Satan had to offer... Satan was hiding the death sin provides by making look life to be had in the here and now..***

***John continues in verse 17 and tells us this is not from the Father but is from the world.***

***He offers the truth as why not to love the things of the world...***

***Pp 3***

...the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever. (vs 17).

***The party in Ephesus is about to be crashed as God has placed Paul in a battle against the dominion of darkness happening at Ephesus in 52 ADS...***

***He is right in the center of Ephesus and a riot is about to break out... And like Paul, where God is, he is.... and there ain't no backing down...***

***He armored up and went to battle... Paul knew what this battle was about..***

***pp 4***

***Ephesians 6:12 ESV***

***For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.***

***Turn with me to the book of Acts chapter 19 and let's see what's going on...***

***Now remember, Paul showed up at Ephesus and***

***finds a few disciples of John the Baptist... He finds that they have not yet received the baptism of God the Holy Spirit.***

***So Paul, being the apostle to the gentiles, lays hands on them per the guidance of God the Holy Spirit and they receive the indwelling or baptism of the Spirit...***

***He does not stop there as we read in verse 11...***

***Pp 5***

***Acts 19:11-16***

***God gave Paul the power to perform unusual miracles.***

***Don't miss this... God gave Paul power to perform unusual miracles... What were they? Look with me at verse 12...***

***Pp 2***

***(12) When handkerchiefs or aprons that had merely touched his skin were placed on sick people, they were healed of their diseases, and evil spirits were expelled.***

***The pieces of material Paul was wearing were presumably those which Paul used in his tent making or leather working as Paul worked as a tent maker to support the ministry..***

***News travels fast in Ephesus especially when the favored Cult of Diana is interrupted by God as we see inverse 17***

#### ***Pp 4***

***Act 19:17***

***The story of what happened spread quickly all through Ephesus, to Jews and Greeks alike. A solemn fear descended on the city, and the name of the Lord Jesus was greatly honored.***

***In the Greek a “Phobos Ep-ee-pep-to” came upon them.. a solemn fear..***

***A feeling of great fear and reverence. They were in awe of the presenting of the gospel... The real God showed up with the power to change a heart from sin to salvation...***

***As a result of the gospel message...***

***Pp 5***

Acts 19:18-20

Many who became believers confessed their sinful practices.

***Not only did they renounce their sinful ways, their repentance was qualified with an action.. What action? Look at verse 18***

(19) A number of them who had been practicing sorcery brought their incantation books and burned them at a public bonfire. The value of the books was several million dollars.

***You see, anyone can repent, but true repentance will promote a change in the heart which in turn has an action or change in behavior verifying the repentant heart..***

***I'm not just sorry I got caught, I'm sorry for the effect of my sin on your life and want to be restored to honor with you...***

***I'm not just trying to avoid punishment, I'm***

***accepting responsibility and desiring a change in my behavior... That is true repentance...***

***And the Ephesians who had repented by faith through God's grace put their words into action and had been practicing sorcery brought them incantation, meaning their prayer and ritual practices books and figures, and burned them at a public bonfire,***

***They ridded themselves of the filth in a public display for all to see as their life had changed...***

***And now, at the throne of the God of all creation would now forever be their place of worship.***

***So we see in verse 20 the results of God working in Paul..***

***Pp 6***

***So the message about the Lord spread widely and had a powerful effect (v 20).***

***Paul's battle is far from overs as shortly afterward there arose a great commotion about the Way..***

**Look at verse 23..**

**Pp 7**

About that time, serious trouble developed in Ephesus concerning the Way (vs 23).

***Christians of the first century called themselves the people of the way and so this commotion that rose up in Ephesus was directed against those who were representing the way which was the way of Christ***

***Christians were first called Christians at Antioch however here in Ephesus they were named for their way with representing Jesus Christ..***

***But as we look here in acts chapter 19 we read that this great commotion or trouble took place for a certain man named Demetrius..***

***He was a silversmith who made silver shrines of Diana which brought about a huge profit to him and his fellow craftsman...***

***Let's turn to Acts chapter 19 and begin with verse 24.***

***Remember, Paul is now at Ephesus 52-55 AD to plant the church he will write from his imprisonment in Rome some 10-12 or so years later which is the letter to the Ephesians we are in now... We are getting a little more insight on why one needs to armor up to battle against the darkness..***

***Pp 8***

Acts 19:24-41 ESV

For a man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought no little business to the craftsmen.

(25) These he gathered together, with the workmen in similar trades, and said, "Men, you know that from this business we have our wealth. (26) And you see and hear that not only in Ephesus but in almost all of Asia this Paul has persuaded and turned away a great many people, saying that gods made with hands are not gods. (27) And there is danger not only that this trade of ours may come into disrepute but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis may be counted as nothing,

and that she may even be deposed from her magnificence, she whom all Asia and the world worship.”

***This may sound like an overstatement being made about the importance of the shrine to Diana but in that culture and in that period of history the devotion in Asia minor to the goddess Diana was enormous...***

***And the challenge or threat of Christianity to this cult religion was one that created a massive controversy...***

***Look how the people reacted***

***Pp 9***

(28) When they heard this they were enraged and were crying out, “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!” (29) So the city was filled with the confusion, and they rushed together into the theater, dragging with them Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians who were Paul's companions in travel.

(30) But when Paul wished to go in among the crowd, the disciples would not let him.

(31) And even some of the Asiarchs, *(The officials of Asia were prominent citizens, friendly to Rome. They had been given the title of honor, "Asiarch," and were also friends of Paul)* who were friends of his, sent to him and were urging him not to venture into the theater.

(32) Now some cried out one thing, some another, for the assembly was in confusion, and most of them did not know why they had come together.

(33) Some of the crowd prompted Alexander, whom the Jews had put forward. And Alexander, motioning with his hand, wanted to make a defense to the crowd.

(34) But when they recognized that he was a Jew, for about two hours they all cried out with one voice, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

***The way I might describe this scene to us would be for us to go back in history to the years of Hitler's rants..***

***I have seen, and possibly you also have seen, film clips of the mass rallies that took place in Berlin during the reign of Adolf Hitler...***

***Hitler would give these outbursts and his tantrums, and the masses of people would stand there in the square and raised their right arm crying "askew siegheil" meaning Hale or praise Hitler...Hale Hitler.***

***If you have seen those films of the mass hysteria that was generated around the speech of Hitler then place that image back to what was going on here in Ephesus for two hours...***

***This mob scene continued chanting..."great is the goddess Diana" in protest against the preaching of the Apostle Paul...***

***Finally the city clerk quieted the crowd as we read in verse 35..***

And when the town clerk had quieted the crowd, he said, "Men of Ephesus, who is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple keeper (*"neokoros"*) of the great Artemis, and of the sacred stone that fell from the sky?

(36) Seeing then that these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rash.

(37) For you have brought these men here who are neither sacrilegious nor blasphemers of our goddess.

(38) If therefore Demetrius and the craftsmen with him have a complaint against anyone, the courts are open, and there are proconsuls. Let them bring charges against one another. (39) But if you seek anything further, it shall be settled in the regular assembly. (40) For we really are in danger of being charged with rioting today, since there is no cause that we can give to justify this commotion." (41) And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly.

***So Paul and his cohorts were able to escape the wrath of this mob and continue on with their ministry...***

***This event in Ephesus is a reminder to me of the freedom and liberty extended to me by our men and women of the United States armed forces..***

***And might I also add their families who sacrificed along with them providing this freedom...***

***God bless you and thank you from my heart as you, and the ones before, fought a spiritual battle against the dominion of darkness to keep gospel message free to be delivered without me fearing for my life...***

***So Paul, to the day he died had a special affection for his comrades he was with as proclaimed the gospel to Ephesus..***

*He remembers with them those death-defying days and moments as he ministered to the Ephesians..*

*It is to these people that he writes this epistle...*

*We need to keep that in our mind as we look at the body and content of the letter...*

*Although we say that the letter is to the Ephesians, there is also reason to believe that Paul intended this letter not only for the Christians who were assembled in that city but also to other areas nearby.*

*It was the custom of the 1st century church when they received these letters from the Apostle Paul to have them read them aloud in their congregational meetings...*

*After doing so, they then made copies of these letters and circulate them to the other congregations in the same region.*

*We certainly have every reason to believe that Paul's letter to the Ephesians was also circulated*

*beyond the confines of the city of Ephesus and had a tremendous impact in shaping the thinking of the early Christian community in Asia minor..*

***And now here in Ephesians you and I get to read what Paul, under inspiration of God the Holy Spirit, wrote to the Church established at Ephesus..***

***Right here in our hands... What a treasure we have.***

*Love to each and every one of ya...*

*Pastor Mike*