

Fact Sheet for **“Why Do You Believe?”** **Acts 19:21-41**

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Let's consider a very large group of people whose faith was built on emotion, form, and what was generally accepted – those who worshiped Artemis.

ESV ²¹ ¶ **Now after these events Paul resolved in the Spirit to pass through Macedonia and Achaia and go to Jerusalem, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome."**

“these events” – Acts 19:1-20

“Rome” – Paul would be imprisoned there

²² **And having sent into Macedonia two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while.**

²³ ¶ **About that time there arose no little disturbance concerning the Way.**

“the Way” (Acts 16:17; 18:25-26; 24:14)

²⁴ **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.**

Demetrius was probably the leader of the guild. Artemis of Ephesus was a tremendously popular deity. The Greek traveler Pausanias stated that she was the goddess most worshiped in the Mediterranean world. She was a fertility goddess, wearing a necklace of acorns, with the signs of the zodiac on her breastplate, wearing a high crown topped with the turrets of the city of Ephesus. Her image appears on coins, papyri, wall paintings, reliefs, statuettes, and in larger statues (some 50 of which have been excavated in widely separated parts of the ancient world). Her then current temple was considered one of the wonders of the ancient world. “The temple of Artemis was the glory of Ephesus. It was 425 feet (130 m) long and 220 feet (67 m) wide, having 127 white marble columns 62 feet (19 m) high and less than 4 feet (1.2 m) apart.”¹

Money was uppermost in their minds. Their worship of Artemis was in reality hypocritical.

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."**

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.**

This theater was an amphitheater that could seat 25,000 people (about ½ that of Autzen Stadium).

³⁰ **But when Paul wished to go in among the crowd, the disciples would not let him. ³¹ And even some of the Asiarchs, who were friends of his, sent to him and were urging him not to venture into the theater.**

¹ NIV Archaeological Study Bible, p. 1809.

Paul, not the followers of Artemis, had the truth that could lead to eternal life!

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.

Lots of emotion, little thought

“assembly” – vs. 32, 39, 41 (ἐκκλησία, the same word used for “church”)

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.

Alexander was not a Christian. He was Jewish. His intent was to say that this uproar was not because of the Jewish community.

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!" 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 of the great Artemis, and of the sacred stone that fell from the sky?"

“The term **city clerk** (*grammateus*, lit., ‘scribe’) does not do justice to this man’s position. Actually he was the chief executive officer of the city.”²

“the sacred stone that fell from the sky” - meteorite

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.

Our faith is built on truth, the truth of God’s Word. I want to give you two pieces of truth this morning.

In a debate of February 4th Bill Nye repeated said that Ken Ham’s belief in creation was based on a religious book that was translated, and translated, and translated... giving the thought that it has been so changed from the time it was first written that it is not reliable, and includes ideas about creation that may never have been part of the original documents. Is this true? Has the Bible been altered since the books were first written so as to either add creation or remove difficulties?

1st – Our translations are not translations of translations. They are translation based on the best and most ancient Hebrew and Greek manuscripts we have.

2nd – If later copyists changed words to remove difficulties, and their changes are seen in our current English versions, then we should expect to see more difficulties and contradictions in the most ancient manuscripts. Instead, we find just the opposite. There are much fewer.

Why do I believe? Because of the inspired, inerrant truth of the Bible!

² The Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament, p. 412.