

# Awakening and Disturbance

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[ 0 : 00 ] Acts 19, verse 11 through 41.

And God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, so that even handkerchiefs! or aprons that had touched his skin, were carried away by the sick, and their diseases left them, and the evil spirits came out of them.

Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists undertook to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul proclaims.

Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this, but the evil spirit answered them, Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you? And the men in whom was the evil spirit leaped on them, mastered all of them, and overpowered them so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

And this became known to all the residents of Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks, and fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was extolled. Also many of those who were now believers came confessing and divulging their practices, and a number of those who had practiced magical arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all, and they counted the value of them and found it came to 50,000 pieces of silver.

[ 1 : 31 ] So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily. Now after these events, Paul resolved in the spirit to pass through Macedonia and Achaia and to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome.

And having sent into Macedonia two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while. About that time there arose no little disturbance concerning the way, for a man named Demetrius, a silversmith who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought no little business to the craftsmen.

These he gathered together with the workmen in similar trades and said, Men, you know that from this business we have our wealth. 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.

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 in the world worship.

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

[ 2 : 57 ] But when Paul wished to go in among the crowd, the disciples would not let him. And even some of the Asiarchs, who were friends of his, sent to him and were urging him not to venture into the theater.

Now some cried out one thing and some another, for the assembly was in confusion, and most of them did not know why they had come together. Some of the crowd prompted Alexander, whom the Jews had put forward, and Alexander motioned with his hand, wanted to make a defense to the crowd.

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. 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.

Seeing then that these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rash. For you have brought these men here who are neither sacrilegious nor blasphemers of our goddess.

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. But if you seek anything further, it shall be settled in the regular assembly.

[ 4 : 09 ] 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. And we had said these things, they dismissed the assembly.

During college I had a friend who was neglectful of his hygiene and of his self-care. He took showers, but not as often as the rest of us took showers.

And we nicknamed him Mullet because he had a mullet. And this was during a time, now mullets have come back in style, unfortunately. I don't see anybody with a mullet in here.

Jack wanted a mullet for a little while. Anyhow, he probably still does, I don't know. But he just did all kinds of unsanitary things that aren't worth mentioning tonight.

He was gross. And he didn't care that he was gross. At least he didn't care until he met a girl. And that changed everything. He cut his hair.

[ 5 : 12 ] He combed his hair. He started dressing better and he stopped acting so gross. This girl changed him. She didn't just change his appearance, but she helped him mature. He stopped acting so goofy and started acting more dignified.

This girl changed his interest and he welcomed the change because she changed his affections. I share that story because in a way the change my friend experienced is analogous to the much greater transformation a person experiences when they are saved by God.

The Bible says when God saves a person, they undergo a new birth, that they are transformed, that they experience the love of God in sending his son Jesus to die for their sins and there indwelt by his spirit.

And all of this affects change. Change in the way they live. Change in what they value. Change in what they live for. Change in what they love.

And many other things. In this passage that we're studying tonight, we are once again reminded of the power of the gospel, excuse me, of Jesus Christ to affect change. To bring transformation.

[ 6 : 20 ] To bring life where there was death. To bring light that expels darkness. Paul is in Ephesus, a major city full of people with many different interests.

Ephesus was home to Artemis, also known as Diana, who was the pagan goddess of fertility. Her worshipers believed that her image fell from heaven and was housed in a temple.

But when Paul arrived there and began preaching the gospel about a crucified and risen savior, a powerful transformation took place. With results that many of the people in that city were turning away from worship of a false god to worship of the true god.

But as has been the case before, opposition eventually arises. Not everyone in Ephesus is excited about the spiritual awakening taking place there. Verse 23 captures the effects that Paul's preaching of the gospel had on Ephesus.

It says again that there arose no little disturbance concerning the way. Christ's work through Paul was causing a great disturbance. A number of disturbances.

[ 7 : 28 ] We looked at the disturbance Paul's preaching of the gospel in the synagogue in Ephesus created last week. And in verses 11 through 19, we read about the disturbances in the demonic realm.

In verses 23 through 41, we read about the disturbances in the city center. And from one point of view, the gospel created a great disturbance. But from another point of view, the gospel created a great awakening.

And so the main idea for tonight's study is that the proclamation of the gospel creates a great awakening for some and a great disturbance for others.

The proclamation of the gospel creates a great awakening for some and a great disturbance for others. Jonathan Edwards lived from 1703 to 1758, and he's considered to be one of the greatest pastors and theologians that America has ever produced.

Edwards was born in East Windsor, Connecticut, and from a very early age, he developed an interest in theology. At the age of 13, he entered Yale, and he graduated at the head of his class at the age of 19.

[ 8 : 41 ] Anybody ever graduate college at the age of 17? Yeah. And then he was licensed to preach at the age of 20. In 1727, Edwards was ordained in the Congregational Church and began serving with his grandfather, Solomon Stoddard, in his church in Northampton, Massachusetts.

Edwards' grandfather died two years later, and then Edwards became the full-time leader of the church, pastor of the church. And he was heartbroken over just the spiritual lethargy that he saw in his church and in the community, and seeing people who made professions of faith, but few who showed any actual evidence of genuine conversion.

And so Edwards began preaching about spiritual lethargy. His first sermon series in the church was on justification by faith alone. He feared that many professing believers were self-deceived, trusting in their own good works for salvation.

He preached his most famous sermon on July 8, 1741, called Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God. It's reported that during that message, people were so overcome with conviction that they were shrieking and groaning and shaking with holy fear.

This sermon, many believed, was what sparked the great awakening in America. Other prominent preachers during that time, like George Whitefield, were used to fan this spark into a flame, but Edwards is the one who most people see as the primary instrument that God used to bring revival to America.

[10:14] What's interesting about Edwards is that while he was brilliant, he was not a very gifted speaker, at least in how the world would define a gifted speaker.

Edwards would preach with a manuscript, and when he preached, he preached with little animation. People said he had such poor eyesight that he would hold his sermons close to his face so he could read it.

Still, Edwards' sincerity in the content of his messages were used by God to awaken the dead hearts of sinful people as they repented of their sins and they turned to the Lord in faith.

In an essay on Jonathan Edwards and the Great Awakening, J.I. Packer notes ten elements that are present in an awakening or a revival. So these are ten things that if it's a genuine revival, a genuine awakening, these are what we'll see.

First, God comes down. Second, God's Word pierces. Third, man's sin is seen. Fourth, Christ's cross is valued.

[11:14] Five, change goes deep. Six, love breaks out. Seven, joy fills hearts. Eight, each church becomes itself, meaning God has felt there his presence to bless in the midst of those who are his.

Nine, the lost are found. And ten, Satan keeps pace. When we read Acts 19 in the book of Ephesus, we see that Ephesus experienced the movement of a great awakening.

The proclamation of the gospel created a great awakening for some, and it also created a great disturbance for others in Ephesus. And so our passage records three movements in Ephesus as a result of the proclamation of the gospel.

So the first movement, God displays his power. God displays his power. I want to read verses 11 through 12 again. And God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his skin were carried away by the sick, and their diseases left them, and evil spirits came out of them.

Probably about ten years ago or more, I was watching TV. This was late at night with Danny. I was on TV, and I can't remember what channel it was, but the Apostle Timothy was on TV.

[12:34] And the Apostle Timothy had green hankies that he had touched and that he had prayed over. And if you called this 1-800 number, the Apostle Timothy would give you the green hanky, and you could use it to put it over whatever ailment or illness you had.

I decided I'm going to call. He says it's free. I'm going to call. I was asked three or four times to pay money before I could have gotten it for free, and by that time, I didn't really want it.

I told that story before, and I didn't tell them that I didn't get the handkerchiefs. They're like, what did you do with the handkerchief? And I said, well, I keep it with me all the time. Do you want to be healed? No, I'm just joking.

Tom Schreiner told a story about a person who sold prayer carpets. He told prospective buyers that previous buyers had prayed on the carpet and received trips to Hawaii and mobile homes.

Those are abuses of this passage. Luke is describing a historical event. He is not prescribing an activity that we should mimic.

[13:41] Paul is the Lord's instrument. He's not selling these things to make a profit. Luke emphatically states that it was God who was doing these miracles. Ephesus was steeped in magic and superstition and demonic activity.

So I think what's happening here is God is condescending to show the Ephesians his sovereign power in a way that would get their attention and draw them to Jesus.

Many Christians want to see a miracle every day, but little of the Christian life involves visible displays of miraculous power. I mean, you just read the book of Proverbs, and we understand that the Christian life really is about submitting to the will of God as he's revealed in his word, walking by the Spirit and pursuing godly wisdom.

The miracles in the Bible served a specific purpose for a specific time. In this case, this specific miracle demonstrated the awesome power of God to a people under the power of darkness. And we see the power of darkness at work in verses 13 through 14. Again, it says, Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists undertook to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul proclaims, seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this.

[15:07] Now, there's no record of a high priest with the name Sceva. Sceva, biblical scholars think that Sceva, like the Apostle Timothy that I mentioned earlier, was a charlatan.

And I think they're right. He was probably a self-proclaimed high priest. He could have been related to a high priest, but it really doesn't matter. This Sceva, though, had seven sons.

The seven sons of Sceva, which kind of sounds like a rock band or something, doesn't it? But these seven sons, they could have been his biological sons or they could have been his disciples.

Whatever the case, they believed that they could exercise or cast out demons by the Jesus whom Paul proclaims. The Greek word translated here as exorcist in the Greek is exorkistin.

When I had Greek class, I liked it when our English word was very similar to the Greek word. I was like, I'm going to get that one. But it appears only here in the New Testament, and it derives from a root word meaning to bind with an oath.

[16:14] Ancient exorcists attempted to expel demons by invoking the name of a more powerful spirit being. When we look at Matthew 12, 22 through 27, we get a kind of a picture of how the Jews viewed exorcism and how they believed that you could cast out a demon by a higher spiritual being, a higher power.

I want to read that to you. A demon-possessed man who was blind and mute was brought to him, and he healed him. Jesus healed him. So the man spoke and saw. And all the people were amazed and said, Can this be the son of David?

But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man cast out demons. Knowing their thoughts, he said to them, Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand.

And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore, they will be your judges.

So you see there was a belief here that demons could be cast out by a greater power. The Pharisees couldn't deny the miraculous healing of the demon-possessed man.

[17:25] So they said basically, Well, Jesus just cast out a lesser demon in the power of a greater demon. Of course, they were wrong. A passage in Scripture that pumps me up is recorded in Matthew, Mark, and Luke's Gospels, and it's when Jesus heals the garrisoned demoniacs.

Matthew records that there were two, while Mark and Luke choose to focus primarily on one. I want to read Mark's account in chapter 5, verses 1 through 13. Jesus and his disciples came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the garrisons.

And when Jesus had stepped out of the boat, immediately there met him out of the tombs, a man with an unclean spirit. He lived among the tombs, and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain.

For he had often been bound with shackles and chains, but he wrenched the chains apart, and he broke the shackles in pieces. No one had the strength to subdue him. Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains, he was always crying out and cutting himself with stones.

And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and fell down before him, and crying out with a loud voice, he said, What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me.

[18:36] For he was saying to him, Come out of the man, you unclean spirit. And Jesus asked him, What is your name? And he replied, My name is Legion, for we are many. And he begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country.

Now a great herd of pigs was feeding out on the hillside, and they begged him, saying, Send us to the pigs, let us enter them. So he gave them permission, and the unclean spirits came out and entered the pigs in the herd, numbering about 2,000, rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the sea.

The demon-possessed man terrified people, but the demons who possessed him were terrified of Jesus, and that's what I love.

They see Jesus from afar, and they run over, or they, you know, they're in the man, they run over to Jesus, and bows down, and begs to be spared of a worse punishment.

And so if you're saved, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, indwells you. No power is greater than God, so we should not fear demons, or any kind of demonic possession.

[ 19 : 48 ] Now back to the seven sons of Sceva. Jewish exorcists were known to offer strange Hebrew incantations, which they believed could bind demonic spirits.

Now for Jesus and those whom he delegated his authority to cast out demons, we see them simply commanding them to come out. No spell, no incantation, no holy water, no crucifix, no special uniform, or anything like that.

They just basically said, go away. And they were forced to flee. The Ephesians were attracted to sorcerers and magic, looking to them and to those things to provide cures and blessings for a price. It was common for charlatans to borrow names to use their incantations. After observing Paul's ministry, these men decided to cash in on Jesus' name, much like Simon the sorcerer wanted to do in Acts chapter 8.

But their attempt backfired in a humiliating way. Verses 15 through 16 again say, But the evil spirit answered them, Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?

[ 20 : 56 ] And the man in whom was the evil spirit leaped on them, mastered all of them, overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. Have you ever heard someone describe a fight or a game where one person or one team completely dominates the other and they describe it by saying, they got the pants beat off of them?

These men literally got their clothes beaten off of them. If you start a fight wearing pants, and when it's over, you no longer have pants on, I think it's fair to say you lost that fight.

Alistair Begg referred to the seven sons of Sceva as the seven streakers of Sceva. These men didn't belong to Jesus. And the demon basically said, I know I can't be Jesus or Paul, his servant, but I know I can whip you guys.

And here's the point. The name of Jesus should be worshipped and not misused for witchcraft or anything else. Only those who are truly saved by Jesus are indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

Luke includes this specific episode in Ephesus to make the point to demonstrate the reality and activity of the devil and demons, but also the superior, much superior power of Jesus over all other powers.

[ 22 : 19 ] Verse 17 says, And this became known to all the residents of Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks, and fear fell upon them all, and the name of Jesus was extolled. The people saw the futility of their pagan magic and activities.

They realized the greater power of God. They extolled or magnified the name of the Lord Jesus, and fear and reverence spread through Ephesus, demonstrating that the risen Christ continues to magnify his own name through acts of his own power and judgment.

I remember when I was a youth pastor, we would take our students to this event called Dare to Share. Basically, it was just all about evangelism, teaching the kids how to share the gospel, encouraging our kids to share the gospel.

And we were in St. Louis in a big convention hall that was hosting other events, and right next to where we were was like a Halloween costume convention, but it was, I mean, it's not clowns, and, well, clowns are kind of creepy, but, you know, superhero costumes.

This was like dark stuff. People with these gruesome masks on, and they had painted their faces, and we were coming out. One of these guys, I just kind of saw him out of the corner of my eye, and he had his face painted red, and he had these horns on, and just looked real creepy, and he decided to walk right behind me.

[ 23 : 42 ] I mean, he was right behind me, just staring into the back of my head, I was told later.

And we had this little stuffed animal mascot that we would take with us on trips, or if kids would go, we'd say, hey, take it with you and take a picture of him somewhere.

And so I had that, and I just turned to him, and I said, hey, would you take a picture with our stuffed animal? And he just kept on going. All that to say, we shouldn't be scared of people.

We shouldn't be scared of demons. But also, we shouldn't meddle with dark things, magic things, witchcraft. We shouldn't go to fortune tellers.

We shouldn't go to psychics. We shouldn't have our palms read. We shouldn't play with Ouija boards or any other spiritually dark thing, but we shouldn't be afraid. The power of Christ and the light of Christ overcome and dispel darkness.

If you are saved, the Holy Spirit indwells you, and so you serve the Lord without fear. The next movement, God's Word prevails in verses 18 through 20.

[ 24 : 48 ] So the next movement in this awakening portrays a vivid picture of confession and repentance. Verse 18 says, also many of those who are now believers came confessing and divulging their practices.

So what we're seeing here is repentance. Confessing sin, turning from sin. John MacArthur said that divulging their practices refers to their secret magic spells, which were generally revealed to be useless if they were revealed.

Not only were they doing that, verse 19 adds, and a number of those who had magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all, and they counted the value of them and found it came to 50,000 pieces of silver.

So having heard the gospel, the Word of God, these people saw the worthlessness of these things that they once treasured. Not only that, they realized they were inspired by evil forces.

They didn't just lock these things away or try to sell them to someone else. They destroyed them so that they could never be read and never be used again. This was a costly thing to do.

[ 25 : 53 ] Some people say that 50,000 pieces of silver was equivalent to thousands of dollars or millions of dollars. Again, MacArthur said that one piece of silver in Ephesus was equivalent to a day's wage, so that's 50,000 days worth of work.

And by my math, that's 137 years worth of what you would get paid for working. So if we think of Russell, who we love, 102 years old, he'd still have 35 more years if that was...

if you wanted to buy. I just was interested. I looked up today that one ounce of silver is worth between \$86 and \$94, so that's around \$4.5 million.

These things were valuable, but they no longer were valuable to them once they knew the true treasure of knowing Christ. And that's the point. The point is that the dark arts, dark magic, was prevalent in the city. That's what Luke is trying to show here.

It wasn't just one person's collection. This was... everybody had these things and they were just bringing them and burning them. These new believers wanted a radical break from all that was part of their ungodly lives because the Holy Spirit produced a deep change in their hearts.

[ 27 : 03 ] The power of God brought them from death to life. The Word of God prevailed over the evil words contained in their demonic books. These new believers demonstrated publicly that Jesus was more valuable to them than any God, any power, or even money.

Verse 20 says, So now we come to the third movement, which is that Satan keeps pace.

After summarizing the power of Jesus in Ephesus and before Luke tells us about the resulting protests, he mentions Paul's travel plans in verses 21 through 22. And again it says, Now after these events, Paul resolved in the Spirit to pass through Macedonia and Achaia and to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome.

And having sent into Macedonia two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while. So this gives us a glimpse of what's to come as eventually we move forward in the book of Acts.

Paul plans to return to Jerusalem via Macedonia and Achaia. Then he hopes to fulfill his desire to preach in Rome, to minister in Rome.

[ 28 : 36 ] The Holy Spirit prompts this decision even though he lets Paul know that trials await him in Jerusalem. And that's just another reminder that God often calls us to do hard things and to endure hard things, but it's always better to obey God, trust in his plans, and go or do what he commands us to do because we know that he works all things together for the good of those who love him.

Paul apparently wrote 1 Corinthians while here in Ephesus. So not only was he preaching and evangelizing and teaching, he was also writing. He sent the letter to the Corinthians with Timothy

and Erastus.

We read about that in 1 Corinthians 16, 5-10. And he later visited Corinth again in Acts 20. Paul's purpose for visiting Jerusalem was to give the poor Jewish believers there an offering from the Gentile churches which pictures how the gospel prevails in breaking down the walls that we often erect in our sin which cause division.

There are not Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians. There are only Christians. There is one body in Christ of which he is the head. So the power of God has been displayed in Ephesus. The word of God has prevailed in Ephesus. But in verses 23-41 we see how Satan works to keep pace. When a revival or an awakening like this happens it not only changes people it also impacts society and culture.

[ 30 : 05 ] Verses 23-24 say again but about this time there arose no little disturbance concerning the way and the way refers to Christianity. This is what they first referred to themselves as going off of Jesus' statement that I am the way the truth and the life.

For a man named Demetrius a silversmith who made silver shrines of Artemis brought no little business to the craftsmen. So Demetrius and others in Ephesus they made their profit off of the worship of Diana.

They made silver replicas of her temple. People would purchase them either as souvenirs or they would take them home and put them on an altar and they would worship her there.

And it's interesting archaeologists have found these miniature statues throughout the Mediterranean world. John Pohlhill described the Temple of Artemis in this way. He said the Temple of Artemis was indeed a hub of Ephesian economic life.

It was an impressive building some 160 feet by 345 feet in dimension built on a platform 240 by 420 feet.

[ 31 : 14 ] The entire edifice was elaborately adorned in brilliant colors of gold leaf. The altar was 20 feet square and contained a massive image of the goddess with a veiled head with animals and birds decorating her head and lower body and numerous breasts from her waist to her neck.

The animals and breasts were symbolic of her status as the ancient Asian mother goddess, the goddess of nature who is believed to protect and preserve the fertility of all living things.

And the temple made a lot of money for the people who worked in the temple. They had so much money that people would often take out a loan from the temple. And sometimes people would deposit their money in the temple.

It was kind of like a bank in that regard. Men like Demetrius made a living off of making images of this temple. And the power of God, though, the prevailing of His word had turned the people away from worshiping Artemis and buying objects that Demetrius and other silversmiths were making.

So you see there's a problem for him. In verses 25 through 27 we see how Satan keeps pace with the spiritual awakening taking place in Ephesus through Demetrius and his anger over how Christianity was impacting his wallet.

[ 32 : 33 ] Verses 25 through 27 These he gathered together with the workmen in silver trades and said, Men, you know that from the business we have our wealth.

And you see in here 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.

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 magnificent she whom all Asia and the world worship.

In other words Demetrius argues Paul's preaching threatens our idol making business. Not only is what he's doing causing us to lose money but our work is also being seen as a disgraceful thing.

So not only is he robbing us of our wealth but he's also robbing us of our reputation. Paul's preaching he's saying basically is misleading people leading them to believe that gods made with hands aren't gods at all.

[ 33 : 41 ] Worse still our city is known for our temple to Artemis and so if this continues our temple will be worth nothing to us anymore or to anyone. we can't sit back and let this man threaten to take away our city as we know it.

And so here he's trying to kind of instigate a sort of Ephesian patriotism. To attack Artemis is to attack Ephesus.

Demetrius had no desire to learn anything about what Paul was teaching. He's driven by the sin of greed which is a form of idolatry. He doesn't care I think so much about Artemis as he cares about himself.

And in our culture while people don't worship statues they do definitely worship money. Money was truly Demetrius' God. And so Demetrius incites his fellow craftsmen to riot verses 28 through 29 when they heard this they were enraged and were crying out great is Artemis of the Ephesians 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.

The theater was the largest public place where Demetrius and the other craftsmen could assemble the people and make their case against Christianity. That theater is still there. Any of you guys ever taken a trip to Ephesus?

[ 35 : 07 ] We all need to go. Let's just all go. I know the LaRue's have and you can just see pictures of it. It's still there which is pretty neat. We'll have to all go see it sometime.

But apparently they couldn't get their hands on Paul so they grabbed two of his companions.

However, verse 30 through 31 says that Paul was ready to enter and join his friends.

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

So this scene is just total chaos. Again, we never see Christians in Scripture forming mobs and rioting. The only time in the Bible we see mobs and rioting is when it happens against Christians. Mobs riot to create confusion and chaos and disorder. And God is not a God of confusion or disorder.

[ 36 : 10 ] Other believers saw how chaotic the situation was and they wanted to keep Paul out of it. The Asiarchs, interesting enough, were powerful members of the noblest and wealthiest families in the province of Asia.

Every year an Asiarch was elected for the entire province and were elected for each city that had a temple that was honoring the emperor. And so the fact that such prominent men were Paul's friends reveals they did not regard him as a danger or carrying out unlawful activity.

And we also see just the work of Paul to try to share the gospel with these men. Maybe they were believers, maybe not, maybe eventually they became believers, we don't know. But they probably had seen these things happen before in their city and they wanted to keep Paul out and just figured hey eventually this thing is just going to burn out.

Verse 33 through 34 says some of the crowd prompted Alexander who the Jews had put forward and Alexander motioning with his hand wanted to make a defense to the crowd but when they recognized that he was a Jew for about two hours they all cried out with one voice great as Artemis of the Ephesians.

Alexander may have been a Jew who converted to Christianity or he may have been an unbeliever who at least appreciated how Christianity was putting an end to idol worship in the city.

[ 37 : 27 ] Perhaps and I think most likely he didn't want the mob to associate Jews with Christians. The rioters may have been wanting to lump the Jews in with the Christians since both worshipped one God who was invisible and they were both opposed to idolatry.

And so maybe he's standing up to make the case that hey don't include us in all of this and when they find out who he is they say ah you know go away and be quiet. Whatever the case was the crowd did not want to hear from Alexander.

In verses 35 through 40 we see that the Lord does what the Lord does by providing a man using the city chief or the city clerk the chief administrator to prevent this ordeal from turning violent.

The clerk was the city's liaison to the Roman provincial government of Asia which had its seat in Ephesus and so he's telling them that hey if we can't govern ourselves then we could lose the privileges that we get from being so closely associated with Rome so knock it off.

The clerk basically says that the worship in glory of Artemis stands secure the rise of Christianity he feels poses no threat he asserts that no earthly movement can threaten one whose image dropped from heaven and he states that the two Christians they seized were not guilty of any crime but if anyone was in danger of committing a crime it was the mob who had incited this riot he was wrong but God used him to put an end to this riot at least the entire event shows us how to advance the gospel it's not by weapons it's not by force it's not by violence God displays his power God's word prevails Satan keeps pace but ultimately God's will will be done ultimately God will win God will be

victorious so how do we adjust to what we've heard proclaim the gospel and pray for spiritual awakening I think we all agree that our nation is in great need of another kind of great awakening and so we pray for it and we proclaim the gospel and we hope that the

[ 39 : 45 ] Lord will bring about a great revival because we need it so be proclaiming the gospel be praying for spiritual awakening and don't fear men don't fear Satan don't fear demons fear the Lord all right I'll pray Heavenly Father thank you for this night that we've had together thank you for your word that we've studied and for the truths that we've heard and been reminded of Lord we know that you and only you are capable of bringing such great awakening such revivals and God we know that the church in this country is in desperate need of an awakening and so Lord we pray that you would be gracious to do it again God we pray that as you did in Ephesus as you've done in many other places as you are doing and I believe in some other countries right now that you would do a great thing in America to just waken up your people from spiritual lethargy that we would proclaim your gospel with conviction and courage and that

Lord you would save people and that you would turn things around from the direction that they're going in but Lord even if not we know that you're good we know that your plan is right and we know Lord that we have reason to hope in Jesus always and so we thank you for that truth and we praise you for it we ask these things in Jesus name amen Thank you.