

ACTS: To the Ends of the Earth

Study 43: Christ Changes Culture

READ Acts 19:21-41 and **LISTEN** to the [sermon](#) by Pastor Craig.

What practical impact can the gospel have upon an idolatrous culture? Our study shows us, much in every way. Ephesus was known as the epicentre of the worship of Artemis (known as Diana by the Romans) across Asia. Before the Apostle Paul arrived there, the local artisans had a lucrative market making and selling little silver shrines of Artemis for the many pilgrims that came to worship her. However, in the face of the One true God, their business dried up as many came to recognise “gods made with hands are not gods” (v. 26). Despite a mass riot breaking out against the church, the Lord protected her.

Big idea: When Christ redeems a culture for Himself, opposition and divine protection are never far away.

Questions:

1. A. Why do you think Paul decided to pass through Macedonia and Achaia before going to Jerusalem (vv. 21-22), considering they are in the opposite direction? See Rom 15:23-25 and 1 Cor 16:1-9.

B. What does this teach you about church ministry beyond one’s local church?
2. A. What reason does Demetrius give in v. 26 for the loss of his business?

B. Thomas Chalmers spoke of “the explosive power of a new affection” as a means of turning from idols and sin to Christ. What might this mean and how is this seen in our passage? See also Rom 1:21-23 and Gal 5:16.

C. Read Isaiah 44:9-20 to understand the folly of idolatry. What might be some “idols” believers engage with today? How can we rid ourselves of such idols?

3. How did the preaching of the gospel impact the social norms of Ephesus (vv. 23-34)? What type of cultural changes might the gospel have in your suburb or city?
4. When presenting the gospel, how confrontational should we be towards our sinful culture? Where is the balance between grace and salt (Col. 4:6)?
5. A. How would you describe the mood of the rioting crowd (v. 32)? How can this story give you pause as you think through political, theological, or other issues?

B. What do you think was the secret of Paul’s peace before the rioting crowd?
6. How might the protection the church found in the town clerk (vv. 35-41) act as both a blessing from God and a potential concern for ongoing ministry work? What do you learn from this?

STOP AND PRAY:

Adore: the Lord who is the immortal God, set apart from all other gods or idols
Thank: God for opening up your blind eyes and giving grace to turn to Him from idols
Pray: for God to search your heart to see if there are any affections taking His place