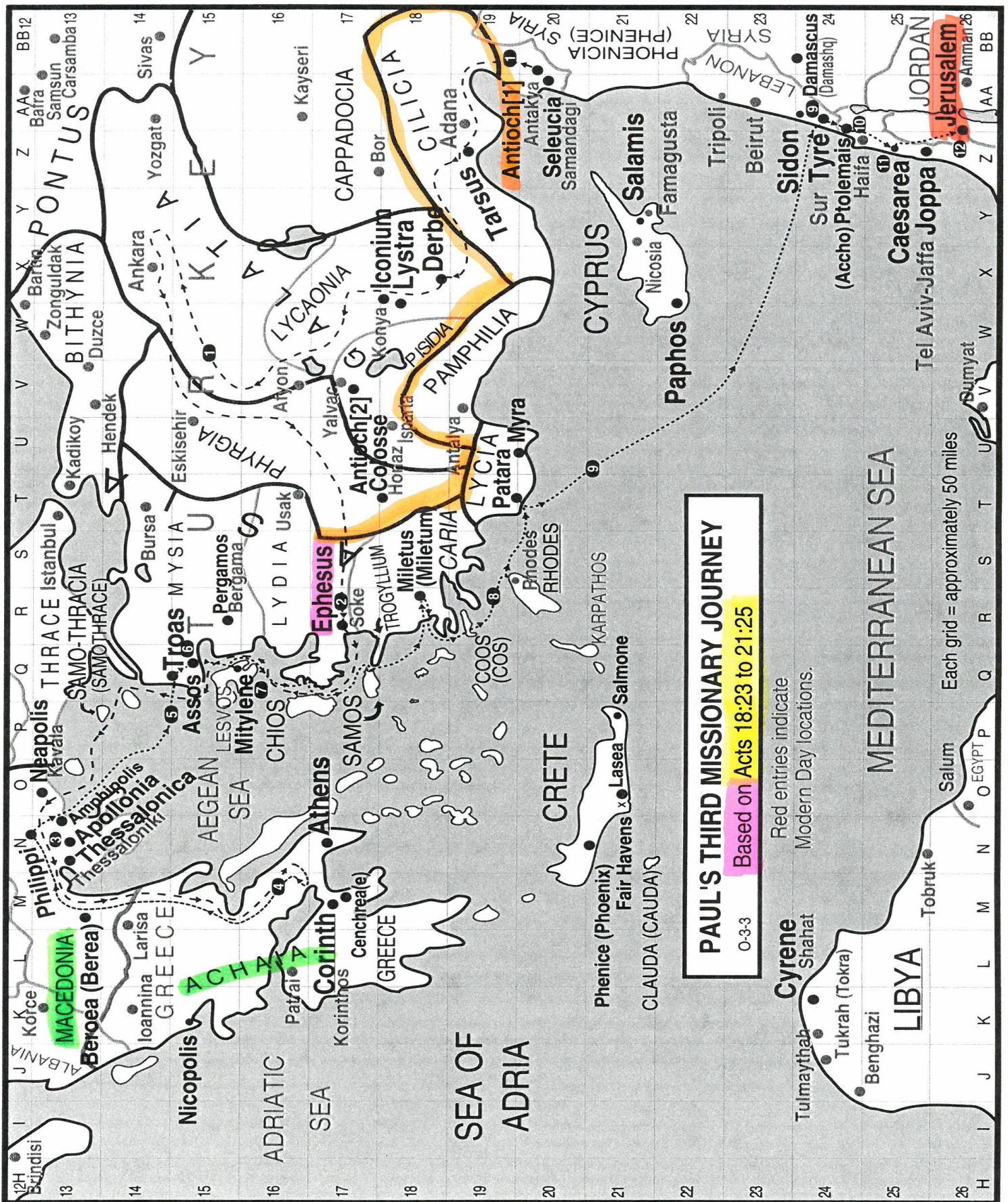


ACTS 19:21-41



Introduction: As we have seen in the book of Acts, a great truth reveals itself to us and that is the church thrives when being persecuted. Often a bold church that stands for truth suffers, only to make it stronger. The early Body Church experienced opposition from its inception.

1. In Antioch, it came from prejudice and envy (Acts 13:44-45).
2. In Lystra, it was the result of ignorant paganism (Acts 14:8-19).
3. In Philippi, it was the reaction to a victory over demons (Acts 16:16-40).
4. In Thessalonica, it came from an unruly mob, urged on by jealous religious Jews (Acts 17:1-9).
5. In Athens, the gospel faced the opposition of worldly philosophy (Acts 17:16-34).
6. In Corinth, again it came from Jewish Judaism in a Roman court (Acts 18:5-17).

Note: It is the same today. When the gospel of grace (D.B.R.) is presented, Satan's opposition can't be far away. As we will see here in Ephesus, hardness-paganism-hatred-and idolatry await Paul's gospel!

A.

Acts 19:21-22 - After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome.
Acts 19:22 So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season.

1. Paul, in his thinking after he leaves Ephesus, plans to go to Jerusalem by way of Macedonia and Achaia (Greece-Corinth).

****Remember, Paul's heart always yearned to go to his brethren (Rom. 9:1-3, 10:1).**

2. The saints in Jerusalem were now poor and struggling financially. To help meet their need, Paul is going to swing by his previously established churches and ask for a collection to be taken.

****Do not forget that the Jews gave us a heritage, the scriptures, Savior, and Paul. We owe them so much.**

- a. The reason these Kingdom believers, Little Flock, were hurting was because they had sold their homes and land to give the money to the 12 apostles to distribute it wherever needed.

Luke 12:32-33 - Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Luke 12:33 Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.

Luke 18:22 - Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.

Acts 4:34-35 - Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, Acts 4:35 And laid *them* down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.

- b. Don't forget that after Christ ascended to heaven, they thought He would return within a few years (7 Yr. Tribulation) to reign. All needs would then be met for the 1000-year Kingdom.

Matthew 19:28 - And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

* Now we understand why their homes and lands meant very little to them. They knew that the
* things of this world would be burned up. Christ would return to earth and set up a new world
* (its face), making them short-timers until it happened.

I Peter 1:11 - Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

II Peter 3:9-10 - The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. 2Peter 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

3. However, God had a surprise - the mystery program. Instead of 7 years of Tribulation, God pouring out His wrath and Jesus Christ's glorious return to earth, He put the Jewish Kingdom Program on temporary hold.

a. Because of Israel's fall, unbelief, and rejection of Jesus the Christ-Messiah, God has put them on hold. God raised up a new apostle (Paul) with God's new program....the dispensation of grace - the gospel of grace - the Body of Christ, beginning with Paul (Acts 9).

b. As Paul's new message (D.B.R.'s accomplishments & Body truths) began to replace the Israel kingdom program, Peter and the other believing Jewish leaders saw that and accepted it, but had a hard time understanding it all!

Acts 15:18-19 - Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world. Acts 15:19 Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God:

Galatians 2:7 & 9 - But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as *the gospel* of the circumcision *was* unto Peter; Gal 2:9 And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we *should go* unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

II Peter 3:15-16 - And account *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; 2Peter 3:16 As also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as *they do* also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

*So according to Acts 19:21, Paul's goal was to make it to Rome. He will ultimately make it to Rome, but not how he expected.

4. While Paul is here at Ephesus, he sends Timothy and Erastus ahead to Macedonia and Achaia to prepare the Corinthians for his arrival (for meetings).

- a. *Note: It is at this time, while at Ephesus, that Paul wrote I Corinthians. His plan to visit Corinth was sparked by the news he was hearing about them.

I Corinthians 1:11 - For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them *which are of the house* of Chloe, that there are contentions among you.

I Corinthians 5:1 - It is reported commonly *that there is* fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.

- b. As a result of this Paul took action.

I Corinthians 4:17, 21 - For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church. 1Cor. 4:21 What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and *in* the spirit of meekness?

B.

Acts 19:23-41 - And the same time there arose no small stir about that way. Acts 19:24 For a certain *man* named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen; Acts 19:25 Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. Acts 19:26 Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands: Acts 19:27 So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth. Acts 19:28 And when they heard *these sayings*, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great *is* Diana of the Ephesians. Acts 19:29 And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre. Acts 19:30 And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not. Acts 19:31 And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring *him* that he would not adventure himself into the theatre. Acts 19:32 Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together. Acts 19:33 And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defence unto the people. Acts 19:34 But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great *is* Diana of the Ephesians. Acts 19:35 And when the townclerk had appeased the people, he said, *Ye* men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the *image* which fell down from Jupiter? Acts 19:36 Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly. Acts 19:37 For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess. Acts 19:38 Wherefore if Demetrius, and the craftsmen which are with him, have a matter against any man, the law is open, and there are deputies: let them implead one another. Acts 19:39 But if ye enquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly. Acts 19:40 For we are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse. Acts 19:41 And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.

1. Before Paul can leave Ephesus a strong opposition arises against [vs. 23-that way], referring to Christianity (Christians were different and not idolaters).

*Satan, behind the scenes, uses Demetrius the silversmith to incite a riot by organizing and gathering craftsmen like himself.

2. Diana, the statue goddess, was a many-breasted idol that represented fruitfulness and plenty. Demetrius' and others' jobs were making silver shrines of this goddess. These smaller idols served as household gods and also were presented at the Diana Temple as an offering to her (thousands were made).
3. Multitudes of pilgrims migrated to this city, causing idol making to be an essential part of their economy. With the spread of Christianity, believers were getting rid of their idols. The idol making business began to shrink because they no longer were needed by many. This alarmed the idol makers. Their livelihood-wealth was being threatened by the gospel, so they took action to stop and destroy this Christian movement (vs. 25-26).
4. To enlarge their pockets, they even attached a supernatural significance to their idol [made with hands] in verse 27 (like rosaries). So we see there is money in religion and the threat of losing that money caused a mad uprising. These people's trade was about to collapse, so they began to cry out [Great is Diana of the Ephesians] (vs. 28).
5. Unable to find Paul and confused, the mob grab Gaius and Aristarchus...two of Paul's traveling companions (vs. 29). They are taken to the theatre by the mob, and if the mob had their way, they would have killed them.
6. Some disciples refrain Paul from going into the theatre so that he could continue his work for God. Bedlam breaks out among the mob within the theatre (vs. 30-32). Wanting to protect themselves and their religion's relationship in Ephesus (even though they were also opposed to idols), some Jews put forth a man named Alexander.

****This could be the same Alexander (a Jew) who did harm to Paul - II Timothy 4:14 - [Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works:]**

- a. Alexander was of "like occupation", a coppersmith, who was to explain that the Jews were not the cause for this defection from Diana.

****This is how much the Jews hated Paul! They should have stood with him since they also claimed they were worshippers of the one true God!**

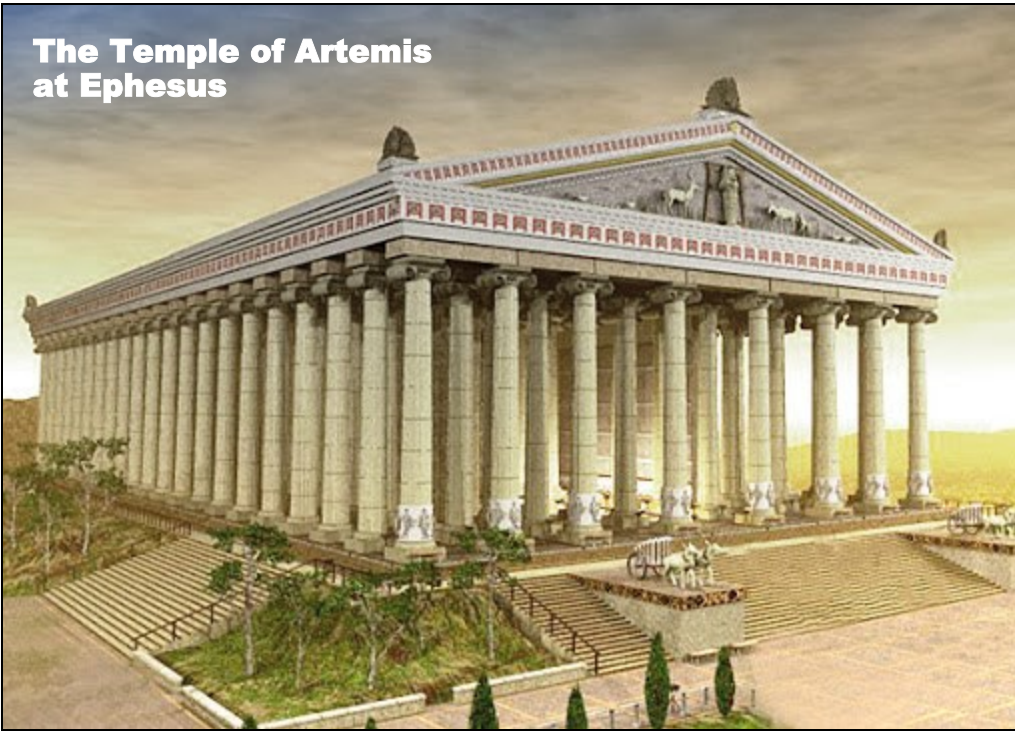
- b. But upon hearing Alexander was a Jew (one who opposed idols), the crowd for the next two hours cried out [Great is Diana of the Ephesians] (vs. 33-34). They were in a frenzy.
- c. Next, it was the town clerk's time to speak. He was calm, tactful, and persuasive as he quieted the unruly and confused crowd. He reinforces the greatness of Diana, but encourages them not to act too hastily. He explains that those who had led [that way] had not stolen or ridiculed their idol Diana.
 - (1) *Paul and his team had not broken any law. Paul and his team had debated and defended what was truth, but they never were insulting or ridiculing.
 - (2) The town clerk argued that since Paul and his companions were not attacking Diana personally, and were even kind in preaching, they needed to be treated fairly. If Demetrius and his craftsmen had a complaint against Paul and his companions, they needed to be brought before the law (vs. 35-39).

- (3) The clerk then warned them that the Romans, who were the conquerors, were watching them. If the Romans looked upon this outbreak with displeasure, they would retaliate with force (vs. 40).

Example: Acts 21:31-32 - And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. Acts 21:32 Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them: and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul.

- (4) **Having calmed the situation down, the town clerk dismisses the assembly (vs. 41). Once again, God's sovereignty overruled Satan's opposition to allow a young struggling church at Ephesus to continue.
7. If we observe - these were mainly Gentiles, thus showing that the Jews were now rapidly taking the backstage as the Body Church (Gentiles) was becoming center stage. This transition will be completed by the end of Acts 28.

The Temple of Artemis at Ephesus



The Temple of Artemus (Greek: Artemision; Latin: Artemisium), also known as the Temple of Diana, was a Greek temple dedicated to Artemis completed around 550 BC at Ephesus (in present-day Turkey) under the Achaemenid dynasty of the Persian Empire.

Nothing remains of the original temple, which was considered one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. The temple was a 120-year project started by Croesus of Lydia. It was described by Antipater of Sidon, who compiled a list of the Seven Wonders.

One of the statues of Artemis recovered from the Temple of Artemis, at the Ephesus Archaeology Museum.

