

Alexander's Denied Defense of Discipleship

Compiled by Paul R. Blake

Introduction: Acts 19:21-41

- A. A sermon about silencing sermons; denying disciples of Christ a voice with which to defend the doctrine; protesting prophecy, outlawing oratory
 - 1. Alexander was shouted down by a mob; he was never given an opportunity to speak for Christ.
 - 2. Truth and right have nothing to fear from discussion and debate; only those insecure in their beliefs refuse to question them
 - 3. For this reason, the mob would not allow Alexander to speak
 - 4. For Demetrius and his guild of silversmiths, it was about money and power; allow Paul or Alexander to speak and the guild will lose both
- B. Our world is not different; the players, setting, and gods have changed, the rules of play are still the same
 - 1. The masses, insecure in its faith in their own faith, would rather shout down advocates of the Lord
 - 2. The intellectuals, insecure in their own philosophy, would rather brand advocates of Christ with intolerance and ignorance
 - 3. And the brokers of money and power in mainstream denominations, fearful of losing both, move the masses with inflammatory words in an effort to silence the truth
- C. Of all of the sermons so far in Luke's Book of Outlines, the sermon Alexander did not get to preach is the most revealing about how much Satan and his servants fear the truth
 - 1. This becomes an excellent example of how the Adversary answers the spiritual with the secular

I. ARTEMIS VERSUS GOD

A. Ephesus had one of the seven wonders of the ancient world in its city: the temple of Artemis. Artemis was worshipped as the fertility goddess among the Greeks and Romans and was the principle deity in Asia Minor. The temple of Artemis was the tallest building of its time. The temple was built at the expense of all Asia Minor, and was two hundred and twenty years in building, before it was brought to completion. It was in length 425 feet, by 220 in breadth; and had 127 columns 4 feet in diameter and 62 feet in height, and was adorned with hundreds of beautiful statues. It was also a major treasury and bank of the ancient world, where merchants, kings, and even cities made deposits, and where their money could be kept safe under the protection of the pagan deity. People from around the world came to worship the goddess Artemis; worshippers who, before returning to their homes, bought countless shrines and images depicting Artemis and models of the temple itself. These artifacts, which were used as objects of worship in people's homes, were made and sold by silversmiths in Ephesus.

- B. Three things that manifested the paltry nature of the gods made by men when measured against Jehovah God of Heaven
 - 1. Artemis had no power to defend her temple; she was no god. "To procure himself fame, Erostratus burned it to the ground the same night on which Alexander the Great was born. It was afterwards rebuilt and

adorned, but Nero plundered it of all its riches. The building remains to the present day, but has been turned into a Turkish mosque.

2. Artemis is relegated to history; she is no longer worshiped. God will always be God; He has been worshiped from the beginning and will continue to be worshiped after this world ends
3. Artemis needed a temple to live in and silversmiths to keep her in the thoughts of the masses. God does not - Acts 17:24-25

II. DEMETRIUS VERSUS PAUL

- A. There are three problems pointed out by Demetrius concerning the preaching of Paul. Paul correctly persuaded a considerable number of people that the gods made by hand are not gods.
- B. Demetrius three complaints had nothing to do with his faith in Diana
 1. Loss of money (vs. 25) - Demetrius states that their prosperity is derived from the business of selling these silver trinkets for people to go home and worship Artemis.
 2. Loss of influence (vs. 27) - Their business would fall into disrepute and be discredited if Paul was allowed to continue
 3. Loss of their power base (vs. 27) - Demetrius realizes that if this teaching were to continue, Artemis may be despised and considered worthless by the people and her glory come to ruin.

III. THE MOB VERSUS ALEXANDER

- A. The mob used three arguments that did nothing to prove Diana as a god and actually manifested the insecurity of their faith in Diana
 1. Noise - shouting down Alexander; drowning out the truth does not defeat it
 2. Violence - seizing Paul's companions; fighting the truth does not invalidate it
 3. Anger - filled with rage; anger toward the truth does not impact it

IV. THE SECULAR ANSWER VERSUS THE SPIRITUAL TRUTH

- A. Three things about the city clerk's answer to the mob that proved he was no friend of Paul and no true believer in any god
 1. "We have the power."
 2. "We have the judges."
 3. "We have the law."
- B. Diana of the Ephesians had: Money, Temple, Influence, Craftsmen, Power, Fame, Multitudes, Emotional force, Physical force, Politicians, Judges, Laws
 1. Paul and Alexander had the truth. Diana loses; God wins

V. 21ST CENTURY EPHESUS VERSUS 21ST CENTURY CHRISTIANS

- A. We can't have the weapons of Ephesus to fight the good fight of faith; we couldn't use them if we had them
 1. So, what can we use to defend our discipleship in a world determined to silence the saints? Eph. 6:10-18