

Paul in Ephesus 3: Acts 19:21-41

"The deciding ballot in every election is cast by God himself." ~ R. C. Sproul

Review 19:1-20. Events leading up to the "disturbance": extraordinary miracles, dramatic failure of the 7 sons of Sceva and the power of Jesus' name, revival and burning occult fetishes, and then the "disturbance" of the craftsmen who made idols and fetishes.

19:21-34: "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians"

What was Paul up against bringing the Gospel to Ephesus?

The satanic power that dominated Ephesus was Artemis/Diana (goddess of nature, hunting, and women). There was a massive temple dedicated to Artemis. It is considered one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. There was a big festival celebrating her birthday. Worship of Artemis went directly to Satan. Satan had his demons all over Ephesus.

Paul followed his mission strategy. He preached the Gospel in the synagogue. God-fearing Gentiles and some Jews believed. The HS performed "extraordinary miracles." Paul and his associates preached the Gospel, healed sick people, and cast out demons. House churches grew and multiplied throughout Ephesus. A revival ensued with new believers burning their occult books and fetishes. Satan responded and stirred up Demetrius the silversmith who started a "disturbance" of the peace - a riot.

This is spiritual warfare. On the cosmic level, the kingdom of God is defeating Satan's kingdom. On the individual level people are being set free from Satan's deception, sins forgiven and receiving eternal life.

Mayor of Ephesus: 19:35-41 - Why does Luke record his speech?

The mayor defended Artemis of the Ephesians and the fetish making trade; i.e. the silversmiths who make little silver idols of Artemis.

The mayor also defended the Gospel missionaries and followers of "the Way." He could defend them because they were not sacrilegious or publicly blasphemed Artemis.

The mayor promoted law and order. He warned them not to riot or Rome would intervene and send the National Guard to help local law enforcement (like President Trump threatened to do in Portland, Seattle, Minneapolis, Philadelphia). Government has an assignment from God to maintain law and order and to use force to restrain evil. The mayor feared a higher power - Roman law and order.

Paul had significant support from Asiarchs (19:31). These were prominent politicians and businessmen in Asia.

For us this would be Christian the protection of the Constitution and elected officials at national, state, and local levels - Congressmen and women who fear God and do what is righteous.

Paul and his associates won little battles to set people free from demonic oppression and possession by **privately** preaching the Gospel in the synagogue and house to house. Paul and his missionary associates and the followers of "the Way" didn't publicly "blaspheme" Artemis. They did not say anything demeaning or insulting about Artemis. They didn't do anything sacrilegious. The GR means "temple robber." They spray paint anti-Artemis graffiti on her temple. They didn't **publicly** or directly attack Satan in the Artemis Temple. They preached the Gospel and people repented of their occult worship and practices.

It would be like the Allied forces during WWII attacking Germany. They won battle after battle, but the war wasn't over until they defeated Adolf Hitler in Berlin. The final blow that defeated Artemis came from the Apostle John. It's recorded in the apocryphal "Acts of John" written in the early 2nd century by a disciple of John. John challenged Artemis like Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal and their god.

First, this was Paul's final mission. He spent 3 years in Ephesus training missionaries and church planters to go throughout all Asia. He finished well.

Second, their business making "Ephesian writings" and silver idols of Artemis made them rich. The silversmiths didn't really care about defending Artemis. They probably didn't even believe in the goddess. Artemis was the attraction so they could sell their silver shrines and fetishes. It was the source of their wealth. It was about money, the love of it is the root of all evil: 1 Timothy 6:10: *For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.* The love of money itself is idolatry and greater idolatry than the worship of Artemis!

Any unrighteous activity that makes people rich ought to be **publicly** condemned by Christians. But the more effective method would be **privately** preaching the Gospel to the people involved in the activity.

I want to give you something practical to do, otherwise you are like James 1:23-25. My application is two ministries you can investigate and support if the Holy Spirit leads you. One ministry replicates Paul's missionary strategy in Ephesus to complete Christ's Great Commission. The other is a ministry that targets the equivalent of Artemis in our country and those who get rich from it.

Acts is a training manual for modern Christians. I try to give you the best applications I can from this historical narrative. The important issue is your willingness to receive and obey the word of God. Are you a doer of the Word and not just a hearer? JAMES 1:22-25.

Application

The worship of Artemis and the big temple could represent the satanic religions of Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism. (Replace the Artemis Temple with a mosque, a Hindu temple or a Buddhist shrine.) You wouldn't walk into a mosque and condemn Muhammad and the Qur'an. You win Muslims to Christ one person at a time. You would not walk into a Shiva Vishnu Temple in India and challenge the god to kill you and command the temple to fall down. You do what Paul did and train missionaries and church planters to go from village to village. This is what my friend William Lau does with *The Elijah Challenge*. He trains local believers to do what Jesus trained his disciples to do - heal the sick, cast of demons, and proclaim the kingdom of God. So, Hindus, Buddhists, and Muslims experience the power of Jesus Christ. Read testimonies on the website: <https://theelijahchallenge.org>. I watched his fundraising event this past Thursday and Lee Strobel was the guest speaker, and he shared his book ***The Case for Miracles: A Journalist Investigates Evidence for the Supernatural***.

Where does "the love of money" pollute our country?

There is an evil activity in our country based on the love of money.

I was praying about how to apply this and the Spirit said "abortion." I am comparing Artemis and the silversmiths and the "workers in similar trades" (19:24-25) to the vilest money-making industry in America – abortion. Abortion is all about the money. It's a \$1 billion business annually. Planned Parenthood (a tax-exempt organization!) has \$950 million in total assets! It remains an "essential" service during COVID-19. The woman having the abortion doesn't make any money. It's the abortion providers like Planned Parenthood. The abortion industry makes many people rich and those who are getting rich from the murder of preborn children hate Christians. Abortion is not a woman's right to choose; it is not healthcare; it is murder.

How to bring down the “Artemis” of our country - abortion - and the “silversmiths” (clinic directors, nurses, doctors) who get rich from abortion?

Christians **publicly** protest outside abortion clinics. They carry signs and shout at the women going in. This creates anger. Then the clinic calls the Police to come and remove the protestors.

Vote for politicians who support the sanctity of life. Get a pro-life president to appoint pro-life Supreme Court judges like Amy Coney Barrett.

The more effective means is **privately** preaching the Gospel to the patients, clinic directors, nurses, and doctors. This is the ministry of Abby Johnson.

Abby Johnson was the youngest abortion clinic director.

[Optional testimony: “I worked at Planned Parenthood for eight years, rising through the ranks from volunteer escort, to clinic counselor to clinic director. I was awarded the Employee of the Year prize in 2008 and was one of the youngest clinic directors in the country, setting an example of how to run a clinic to churn out as many abortions – the biggest money maker – as I could. Then it all changed when I was asked to assist in an ultrasound-guided abortion. The fetus was 13-weeks-old and I could easily see it’s head, arms, and legs. The abortion instrument – a suction tube – was on the screen as well. The baby jumped away from it but it was all for naught. The abortionist turned on the suction and I saw that baby get sucked apart right in front of me on the screen and inches from the probe I was holding. In mere seconds, that fetus’ life ended and the screen only showed a black, empty uterus. The life that was there just a couple minutes ago was gone. In that moment, I saw for myself what I was supporting for the last eight years and it broke me.”]

Read about her ministry at <https://abortionworker.com>. “And then there were none.”

Abby Johnson’s strategy to end abortion is personal:

1. No abortion clinic workers (It starts with the workers. This is a pro-love movement. We want to love these workers out of the clinics. Love them into a relationship with Jesus Christ.
2. No abortion clinics
3. No abortions

Watch the movie ***Unplanned***.

Support Life Choices of Memphis: <https://lifechoicesmemphis.org>