



to the **ENDS**  
of the **EARTH**  
Studies in the Book of Acts

Sermon-Based Study Guide  
Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church

Acts 19.23-41 | January 29, 2017

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I. Introduction to this Study

This week we continue our series To the Ends of the Earth, looking at a riot in Ephesus and considering how the gospel turns our lives upside down.

II. Connecting with One Another

Do you care about football? The Super Bowl is next week. If you'll be watching who will you be rooting for? Why? What will you do if you don't watch?

III. Study the Text

- a. Context: This passage occurs during Paul's third missionary journey (see map below), likely during the years AD 53-57. Paul had an extended stay in Ephesus (2-3 years) using that time to build up the local and surrounding churches and to mentor leaders. What benefits are there to staying in one place for so long?



- b. Read Acts 19.23-27. Background: Artemis (Roman name, Diana) was the goddess of fertility. Many, many years ago it was thought that a meteorite fell to earth somewhere near Ephesus. Locals concluded that a "god" had fallen from heaven. This became Artemis. An enormous temple holding her statue was at the center of Ephesian life and many people made their living based on the worship of Artemis.

Paraphrase these verses in your own words. What has happened or is happening? What is Demetrius worried about? Why? What does he do? What strategy does he use to get the response he wants?

- c. Read verses 28-31. Does Demetrius's strategy have the intended affect? What happens?

The theatre of Ephesus seated about 24,000 people. We know that Paul was a skilled orator and passionate about sharing the Good News. Imagine the scene in a room somewhere with Paul, eager to go a speak to the crowd, and his friends, just as eager to protect him. What might have happened had Paul won the argument?

- d. Read verses 32-34. Have you ever been in the midst of a chaotic crowd? What was that experience like?

Why do you think the Jews "pushed Alexander to the front and...shouted instructions to him"? What were the Jews afraid of? What did they want Alexander to tell the angry crowd?

What happens to poor Alex?

- e. Read verses 35-41. How is the City Clerk able to quiet the crowd and ultimately get them to disperse? What strategy does he use?

Note: The main job of city officials in the Roman Empire was to keep the peace. If they could not do that the entire city would suffer, losing civic privileges and freedoms.

- f. Let's return to a story from Paul's second missionary journey, when he was in Thessalonica. Read Acts 17:1-9. What similarities do you see to the riot in Ephesus? What differences?

The NRSV translation has the Jewish accusers saying this, in verse 6: "These people who have been *turning the world upside down* have come here also..." I like this translation for that phrase *turning the world upside down*.

How had the followers of Jesus attained such a reputation? What areas of life were being turned upside down in this story and the story from chapter 19? Should followers of Jesus today have the same kind of reputation? Why or why not?

#### IV. Reflect

- a. Demetrius and many others were frightened that their comfortable way of life would be changed by the "Good News" that followers of Jesus had brought to Ephesus. In what ways has God challenged the status quo of your life in the past or might be seeking to do so in the present?
- b. Paul didn't go to speak to the crowds at the Ephesian theatre, perhaps "losing the battle to win the war." Can you think of situations when you have had to employ this strategy? What tensions can be there when confronted with such situations?
- c. The Jews did not want to be associated with the Christians and share the blame for the economic problems of the local merchants. Are there times when you have not wanted to be lumped in with actions of other Christians? Why or why not? What might other Christians do that might cause you to feel this way?
- d. How can you, your group and our church be those who "turn the world upside down" for Christ?

#### V. Pray

- a. Start by sitting quietly...become aware of God's presence...spend a few moments praising God for who God is: sovereign...righteous...loving...merciful...just.
- b. Bring your confession to God, be honest about that which you have done or left undone that has negatively impacted your life or the lives of others...receive God's forgiveness...you are a new creation in Christ Jesus.
- c. Thank God for the blessings in your life...
- d. Bring before God the people and situations that concern you...speak to God about each one...release them into God's faithful care...Amen.

#### Weekly Reading Schedule

Monday, January 30	Acts 18.18-28
Tuesday, January 31	Acts 19.1-22
Wednesday, February 1	Acts 19.23-41
Thursday, February 2	Acts 20.1-12
Friday, February 3	Acts 20.13-38