

The Name & Word of Jesus Exalted at Ephesus

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[0:00] Take your Bibles and turn to Acts chapter 19. Acts chapter 19, we're going to read the entire chapter. While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus.

There he found some disciples and asked them, Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? They answered, No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit. So Paul asked, Then what baptism did you receive?

John's baptism, they replied. Paul said, John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him.

That is in Jesus. And on hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.

There were about twelve men in all. Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God.

[1:06] But some of them became obstinate. They refused to believe and publicly malign the way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus.

This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord. God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured, and the evil spirits left them.

Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, In the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out.

Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. One day the evil spirit answered them, Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you?

Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding. When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor.

[2:28] Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed their evil deeds. A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly.

When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to 50,000 drachmas. In this way, the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.

After all this had happened, Paul decided to go to Jerusalem, passing through Macedonia and Achaia. After I have been there, he said, I must visit Rome also.

He sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, while he stayed in the province of Asia a little longer. About that time, there arose a great disturbance about the way.

A silversmith named Demetrius, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought in no little business for the craftsmen. He called them together, along with the workmen in related trades, and said, Men, you know we receive a good income from this business.

[3:30] And you see and hear how this fellow Paul has convinced and led astray large numbers of people here in Ephesus, and in practically the whole province of Asia. He says that man-made gods are no gods at all.

There is danger, not only that our trade will lose its good name, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited, and the goddess herself, who is worshipped throughout the

province of Asia and the world, will be robbed of her divine majesty.

And when they heard this, they were furious and began shouting, Great is Artemis of the Ephesians! And soon the whole city was in an uproar. The people seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's traveling companions from Macedonia, and rushed as one man into the theater.

Paul wanted to appear before the crowd, but the disciples would not let him. Even some of the officials of the province, friends of Paul, sent him a message begging him not to venture into the theater.

The assembly was in confusion. Some were shouting one thing, some another. Most of the people didn't even know why they were there. The Jews pushed Alexander to the front, and some of the crowd shouted instructions to him.

[4 : 45] He motioned for silence in order to make a defense before the people. But when they realized he was a Jew, they all shouted in unison for about two hours, Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!

The city clerk quieted the crowd and said, Men of Ephesus, doesn't all the world know that the city of Ephesus is the guardian of the temple of the great Artemis, and of her image, which fell from heaven?

Therefore, since these facts are undeniable, you ought to be quiet and not do anything rash. You have brought these men here, though they have neither robbed temples nor blasphemed our goddess.

If then Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a grievance against anybody, the courts are open and there are pro-councils. They can press charges. If there is anything further you want to bring up, it must be settled in a legal assembly.

As it is, we are in danger of being charged with rioting because of today's events. In that case, we would not be able to account for this commotion, since there is no reason for it.

[5 : 53] And after he had said this, he dismissed the assembly. Well, we have a story to tell to the nations and to our neighbors that we have broken the laws of this great God.

But Christ became sin for us. Christ took the blame for us.

Christ took the blame for us. He bore the wrath for us, and we now stand forgiven at the cross.

That's a message that deserves to be heard, and Paul wanted to tell it to as many people as he could in his lifetime.

It was the same message by which he himself had been saved. And so Paul sought out the most populous and most important cities of his day.

Ephesus qualified as such and was the next city in his sights. Now, he had wanted to come to this region on his first missionary journey.

[7 : 00] If you'll remember, the Holy Spirit did not let him when they tried to go there. On his way home from his second missionary journey, the ship he was on did make a brief stop there, and so he took the opportunity and went and preached in the synagogue just for a very brief stay.

They wanted him to stay and tell them more. He said, I'll return if God is willing. And so now here he is in his third missionary journey, and after strengthening the disciples in the region of Galatia and Phrygia, he made a beeline for the capital city of Asia, Ephesus.

This prosperous pagan city was to become the next great center of Christianity and gospel outreach to the Gentiles. The strong church that was planted here would have an influence that would only be surpassed by Jerusalem and Antioch, Paul's home church.

But now here, way out deep in Gentile territory, is the church of Ephesus, which would be a springboard for the gospel throughout the Gentile world.

Ephesus, then, was the next place to experience the transforming power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It was here that Paul's preaching would bear its greatest fruits, and where he would have his greatest success, that can be seen in the fact that he stayed here longer than he stayed anywhere else, a total of nearly three years, and also can be seen in the mighty impact that the gospel had upon this city and the surrounding region.

[8 : 47] So here in Ephesus, the name and the word of the Lord Jesus Christ were highly exalted. That's what we witness in chapter 19 of Acts.

Now in football, there's really nothing spectacular about a 95-yard touchdown run if there is no opponent on the field.

I would imagine that almost all of us here could take a ball on our five-yard line and if not run, limp and crawl and make it all the way to the goal line, 95 yards.

But what makes a 95-yard touchdown run spectacular is when there are 11 opponents standing in your way, big, mean, fast opponents doing all that they can, all in their power to stop you.

What we need to know as we come to Ephesus that the gospel did not triumph in Ephesus in a vacuum. It wasn't that there were no opponents in Ephesus that led to such a triumph of the gospel and such a success here.

[10:02] In fact, while at Ephesus, Paul wrote a letter to the Corinthians, his first letter, and he tells them, he's hoping, I'm hoping to come and see you, but I will stay on at Ephesus here where I am and writing you from.

I will stay on at Ephesus till Pentecost because a great door of effective work has been opened to me and there are many who oppose me.

Many who oppose me. And dear ones, that is always the case. Where work is to be done for the Lord Jesus Christ, be sure that Satan will show up to oppose it.

He hates the souls of men. He hates Jesus Christ and his gospel. And so he will stir up great opposition.

Now Acts 19 shows this opposition arising from three different quarters. There's the unbelieving Jews. Secondly, there's the sorcerers with their black magic.

[11:09] And lastly, we'll see it arising from the idol worshipers of the goddess Artemis. Together, as it were, arm in arm, they stood in the way of the gospel and opposed it coming into their city of Ephesus.

But what we see in chapter 19 is what we've seen all the way through the book. That not all the powers of darkness can stop King Jesus from building his church.

Just as he promised, the gates of hell cannot prevail against it. So their opposition only makes the triumphs of the gospel in this city of Ephesus all the more glorious as again we see Christ triumphing over all his enemies.

Now the first opponent then that stood in the way of the gospel was the unbelieving Jews. This isn't the first time we've seen this almost in every city Paul went to.

If there was a Jewish population with a synagogue, you remember Paul would go there first and would come to some point in preaching at the synagogue, the point where they would kick him out or where he would need to leave.

[12:25] Well, we've come to expect that by now. And so here in Ephesus, there is a Jewish population and there is a synagogue and Paul goes there first and preaches boldly in the synagogue for three months.

It's not the first time he was in this synagogue. Remember at the end of his last missionary journey, just a short stay, preached to them, they said, come back, or they said, tell us more.

And he says, I will when I come back, God willing. Well, now he's back, you see. He's back and he's preaching. He had left Aquila and Priscilla there, so they were there in the synagogue.

And while Paul was gone, Apollos, that learned and eloquent man, had come to Ephesus and he had preached in the synagogue with great power, both before and after Aquila and Priscilla had filled in the gaps in his understanding of the gospel.

And now here's Paul. Back in Ephesus, back in the synagogue, three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God.

[13:38] That's a lot of gospel light shining on them. And notice the gospel is a message about the kingdom of God. It's about the kingdom of God come to earth with the coming of the king, Jesus Christ.

Remember we talked and studied the kingdom of God, God's people and God's place under God's rule and blessing. And here Paul is preaching for three months on this theme of the kingdom of God.

That is the gospel. Jesus Christ bringing his kingdom to the hearts of men and women. Now the Jews were still waiting for the kingdom of God to come with their their coming Messiah.

But Paul was proving from scripture that the kingdom of God had come, that the king, the Messiah king, had come in Jesus Christ of Nazareth. And that his kingdom was spiritual.

It was being set up in the hearts of men and women, boys and girls, that the king had come not to save them from bondage to the Roman armies, but rather had come to save them from their sins.

[14:45] And that they must bow to this crucified and risen and ascended king, Jesus, who is now upon his throne. they must seek forgiveness of their sins from him and receive from him the salvation he freely offers them through repentance and faith.

Well, a lot can be said in three months and we can be sure that Paul said it. And though some believed, others had all that they could take of his message about the despised Jesus of Nazareth being their king.

They refused to believe it. Their initial interest in Paul's message, we want to hear more, they said, has now hardened into obstinate, stiff-necked opposition.

Not only did they refuse to believe, and I think that's an important phrase to ponder a moment. The problem with the gospel is not just up here in the brain.

The problem is in the heart. They refused to believe it. They didn't want to have Jesus as their king and they refused to believe the proclamation that he is king and that only his blood could cleanse them from their sins.

[16:04] They refused. Not only did they refuse to believe the message, they then turned to publicly malign the way. That means they turned to slander.

They couldn't answer the power of Paul's persuasion to prove from the scriptures that Jesus is the Messiah king and so they turned to a public smear campaign, mudslinging against the way.

That is, Christianity. It was called the way. So you see this whole mudslinging going on in the campaigns of today. It's a very old tactic and it was done 2,000 years ago in Ephesus, spreading all kinds of evil things about Christianity and seeking to damage the reputation of Paul and his influence in that city.

Well, would this be enough to snuff out the progress of the gospel in Ephesus? No, because we find our Lord is with his servants and he takes what they meant for evil and he turns it to the further extension of the gospel.

For we read in verses 9 and 10 that Paul left the synagogue and he took the disciples with him and he had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus for two years.

[17:28] Now you do the math and that's 730 more days of gospel light. And now it's going on not in a synagogue but in a public lecture hall that would be now open to both Gentiles and Jews.

And we notice the result in verse 10 so that all the Jews and Greeks not just in the city of Ephesus but who lived in the whole province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.

Now how did this happen? Well, Ephesus was the leading city in that whole province of Asia and so they would draw people from all over who would come to Ephesus for commercial political educational and religious reasons.

And as they flocked into Ephesus many of them would turn into this public lecture hall and hear Paul preaching and then would return home with his message burning in their hearts.

It also seems that during this two to three year period Paul sent out his fellow workers into the surrounding cities perhaps even making occasional visits himself into the whole region.

[18:42] But this stay in Ephesus as I said was his longest stay anywhere and his most successful stay because during this three years a strong church was planted in Ephesus and that will become a leading church as I said Timothy will go there and labor and Paul will write to him when he's a minister at Timothy and he will give that first letter to him and the second letter to Timothy as he's a minister in that church at Ephesus but not just that church at Ephesus there were many other churches planted during this two to three year period in the whole region of Asia Minor so the seven churches that Jesus wrote a letter to in Asia Minor they too were planted during this time Ephesus Smyrna Pergamum Thyatira Sardis Philadelphia Laodicea as well as the church in Colossae and Hierapolis this region was to become a leading center of Christianity for centuries afterwards so in spite of all the opposition of the unbelieving

Jews the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power now there was more opposition in Ephesus than the unbelieving Jews it's his later letter to this church at Ephesus that Paul reminds them that their real struggle is not with flesh and blood Ephesians chapter 6 so your real struggle isn't just with unbelieving Jews or unbelieving Gentiles whoever they may be your real struggle church at Ephesus is with the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms that's your real enemy and as the gospel came into this region where Satan had reigned for centuries keeping men in the darkness we find a showdown then between these demonic forces of evil and the gospel of

Jesus Christ they not only stirred up the unbelieving Jews to slander the way but secondly we find that these demons are behind the sorcerers with their black magic here's the second opposition in Ephesus the sorcerers and their black magic in other words children they did many miraculous supernatural things but they did it by black by evil forces demonic activity was prevalent in Ephesus and it kept people in a in a bondage to superstitious fear it was the center of black magic sorcery witchcraft we learn in verse 19 that those who practice sorcery had their scrolls now these scrolls were instruction manuals for the use of black magic it would spell out on these scrolls the specific procedures and words to use in their incantations and spells and these magical scrolls were known throughout the

Roman Empire as Ephesian letters Ephesian letters they were black magic scrolls and these instructions then were followed to seek good luck to seek success to seek information about the future to ward off bad spirits to ward off bad health poor health physical harm other losses and sometimes bits of paper with these incantations written on them would be worn on their bodies again as good luck charms so Ephesus is a place of great demonic activity that has bewitched and mesmerized the people with the powers of black magic well isn't it interesting that God then steps forward and shows some power of his own indeed we see that in Ephesus something out of the ordinary is done we've seen that with all the apostles they went forth with the one two of preaching and miracles miracles we saw

Jesus gave them power to preach and to do miracles in his name and we've seen that but something special is said here God made awesome demonstrations of his own power by healings and by casting out demons verse 11 God did extraordinary miracles through Paul he not only did miracles which are in themselves fascinating he did extraordinary miracles in healing and casting out demons again to confirm the message that Paul is bringing this gospel message is authorized by the power of heaven God himself now evidently in healing and doing these extraordinary miracles and casting out demons Paul called on the name of the Lord Jesus he did so to leave no doubt as to where this superior power came from don't think that it's come from me don't think that it's come from any of this black magic that's so prevalent in your town no this power has come from the living

[24 : 29] Lord Jesus Christ that I preached to you so he would call on the name of the Lord Jesus and that reality led to a rather humorous event that filled superstitious Ephesus with fear and ended up magnifying the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we had it read for us there were these Jews seven sons of Sceva and they traveled around like gypsy foreign tellers making money gaining influence by using their magical art and spells to drive out demons and to heal people and people who are involved in those kinds of things cannot help but be amazed when they see a power greater than their own remember that was true of Simon Magus wasn't it in earlier chapter in the book of Acts and he did many magical things too but when he saw the power that was resident in the apostles he wanted to pay them money so that he might have that same power well we see this fascination of of these

Jewish exorcists they couldn't help but see that Paul cast out demons and healed people in the name of Jesus so they conclude that they could have the same powerful effect if they would just use the same formula that Paul used calling on the name of Jesus it follows doesn't it you understand their thinking well you see what's going on here these Jewish exorcists are not believers in Jesus they're unbelievers they had no faith in Jesus Christ as God's son and savior of sinners and lord over all powers they had no saving attachment to him no personal relationship with Jesus they just wanted to use his name as a magical formula to cast out demons and you see such a superstitious use of the name of Jesus would drag it down to the level of abracadabra nothing more just a formula to work their black magic we said the third commandment today you shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God that would be a misuse of the

Lord's name you see it would drag down his honor to just some magical word and would discredit all the miracles that Paul had done they would say well he was doing them just the same way that seven sons of Sceva are doing it with their pagan magical arts practiced in Ephesus well what we see is that God cares about the name of his son indeed we find in the letter to the Philippians that because of what he has done in humbling himself and becoming sin for us and taking God's wrath for us the father was so pleased with his obedience unto the cross that he has highly exalted him above given him the highest place and given him a name that is above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow of things in heaven and on earth and even things under the earth

and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is king he is Lord you see the father has exalted him he's lifted his name high and here are these men who are dragging down the name of Jesus misusing the name of the Lord well God is not about to have his son's name prostituted and profaned in this manner so these seven sons of Sceva are in a house with a demon possessed man and they're trying out their new formula they command the demon in the name of Jesus whom Paul preaches we command you to come out and the evil spirit answered them Jesus I know and I know about Paul but who are you who are you the idea is who are you to command me the evil spirit knows Jesus may I say he knows Jesus probably better than many many many people in our country they know who Jesus is just read the gospels they shout out who he is often they know he's the sovereign

Lord over all things them included and this evil spirit also knows Paul as being endowed with the power of Jesus Christ to command evil spirits to leave they know Jesus and they know Paul as one who knows Jesus and is united to Jesus and has Jesus power resting upon him but you who are you to be commanding me and with that the man with the evil spirit jumped on them all remember evil spirits have supernatural power more than natural they have power and so this one evil spirit in this man jumped on all seven of them and gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding he knocked the socks off of them as we like to say and a whole lot more and he gave them a lesson in demonology that they did not soon forget as one commentator says it was reverse exorcism it was the demon driving out the exorcists or as F.F.

[30 : 26] Bruce says they took the name of Jesus as a man taking a weapon he's not familiar with only to find it blowing up in his face the name of the Lord Jesus Christ now this is not the kind of thing that can remain hidden seven naked and bleeding men running for their lives it became the talk of the town every Roman bath on the streets and the marketplace did you hear about the seven sons of Sceva and verse 17 tells us when this became known and it did become known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus they were all seized with fear and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor the word there is the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified magnified now we have two ways of magnifying we can take a microscope and we can take little magnify little things and make them look big that's not what happened in

Ephesus we have another way of magnifying and that's to take a telescope and and focus on something that's huge but looks small to our naked eye and through the magnification we we see up close that which is really big that's what happened in Ephesus Jesus Christ has all power in heaven and on earth but what did he look like to the Ephesians nothing nothing just another name to profane and so God acts on behalf of his his son's name and he magnifies it he shows Ephesus what a great name that is his being the Lord Jesus has such that they were gripped with power this is not a name to be trifled with they saw that Jesus power was far greater and far different than all their magical arts in Jesus name was lifted high and magnified as he deserves the Lord God knows how to magnify the name of his son even as men are profaning it he knows how to magnify it in a city that's given over to sorcery and black magic and not only did it have a sobering effect upon the general population of Ephesus that trembled at the name of Jesus it also had a cleansing effect in the lives of the believers there at Ephesus these new believers these young Christians they the oldest of them is just a couple years old as Paul came to town with the gospel perhaps and and they're young Christians and these new believers who were secretly holding on to some of their past sins still still still seeking good luck perhaps and success with their charms or some knowledge of their future through sorcery health wealth and prosperity from their magical arts this event had a cleansing effect upon the believers as well some of you are learning that old ways die hard we should not think that the Ephesian believers were any different on this score we saw it in Corinth that sin city when Paul writes that letter to the Corinthians he has to call on them to not give their bodies over to sexual immorality there was some of their old habits that did not just fall off like snakeskin when they were converted and so this event in Ephesus was a powerful call for fresh repentance by the Holy

Spirit such that many of those who believed now came and openly confessed their evil deeds a number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly that's costly repentance that's burning the bridges between them and their sin the cost of their their scrolls is estimated at six million dollars it was public renunciation and a definitive break with their past sins they saw as they stood before the powerful name of Jesus there is power in Jesus name to break the habits of sin and they could not go on mixing their old ways with their new life in Jesus a holy

Jesus demands a holy people who are set apart from the sin of the world all around them I wonder do some of you believers new or old need to make a clear break with sinful practices belonging to the old man if we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to what to cleanse us from all unrighteousness he's rich in mercy he's ready to forgive if you are ready to confess and to renounce your sins he's ready to forgive and to show mercy turn your back burn your scrolls burn those things that you cling to that act like a bridge an opportunity to take you back into those old ways burn them and find pardon and power in Jesus name they confess their sins openly you know James tells us confess your sins to each other and pray for each other because the prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective maybe some of you need to find a brother or sister and confess to them your sin and ask for their prayers even as these in Ephesus of old so what are we seeing in Ephesus that in spite of the stiff opposition of sorcerers and demons in Ephesus it was in this way in this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power it spread widely affecting more and more people in that whole region and it spread and grew in power in its influence in people's lives even the lives of believers the power of the name of Jesus the word of the Lord working deeper repentance as well as conversion transforming the lives of bewitched

[37 : 22] Ephesians but there was opposition coming thirdly from the idol worshippers of the goddess Artemis now she was no new god on the block she had been worshipped for many centuries as the mother of both gods and men worshipped not only here in Asia Minor but throughout the known world but Ephesus you see was the center of Artemis worship their city was proud to be called the guardian of the temple of Artemis her temple was built here in Ephesus five centuries 500 years before Jesus came and so her temple had brought great fame to their city it was known as one of the seven great wonders of the ancient world it was made of pure marble try to picture it nearly one and a half football fields long pure marble almost a football field wide pure marble a roof supported by 127 pillars each 60 feet high but the reason for this impressive temple was what was inside of it it was her image the image of Artemis that fell from heaven probably a meteorite that they worshipped as Artemis and as often the case in religion and I must say

Protestant religion as well as Roman Catholic religion a lot of money was being made on Artemis worship in Ephesus silversmiths were getting wealthy making and selling these silver shrines of Artemis idols charms little replicas of the temple each with a little image of Artemis inside other trades as well cashed in on the business it was a cash cow in Ephesus a wealthy city and no small part of their wealth came from these craftsmen making their little idols so Demetrius the leading silversmith starts a riot against Paul and Christianity he called the craftsmen together and he complained that Paul's preaching was liable to totally ruin their profitable business you see he says and you hear how this fellow Paul has convinced and led astray large numbers of people here in Ephesus and in practically the whole province of Asia you see this enemy of the cross is made to confess the triumphs of the cross not just in Ephesus but throughout the province of Asia the word of the Lord was spreading widely and growing in power and even he

Demetrius enemy of the cross cannot deny it well the teaching that was endangering their trade was this speaking of Paul he says man-made gods are no gods at all that's what Paul preached man-made gods are no gods now that should be self-evident shouldn't it that if your God has no existence until you made it that's probably not something that when you are in need you ought to be down on your face praying and worshipping that thing that you made and yet there is a power upon the minds of men the God of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers they can't see right they believe lies instead of the truth they see no beauty in Christ no glory of God in Jesus but they see glory they see something to be worshipped in the things that their own hands have made you talk about demonic blindness but through the gospel and the power of the spirit idolaters were turning from their idolatrous their worthless idols to serve the living and true God in fact it was happening with such great numbers that the demand for silver shrines was down it was hurting their bottom line and this is how the gospel reforms society one conversion at a time this one saved that one saved until such numbers that it affects even the business of a city that's what we need to pray for this town for other towns in our state for our country that there would be such a revival of true religion with sufficient numbers turning in repentance to the living God and worshipping him that whole businesses would shrivel up because no one wants what they're offering anymore that's what happened can you appreciate what God was doing in Ephesus

Demetrius says if this teaching prevails we stand to lose money big time and not just us the temple the temple of the great goddess Artemis is in danger of being discredited as a hoax and the

goddess herself worshipped throughout the world will be robbed of her silver of her divine majesty he's playing upon their pride in their city the guardian of the temple he's playing upon their pride in their religion that we have this temple of Artemis who is worshipped all over the world it's hard to know which is the worst idol in Ephesus Artemis or greed which the Bible says is idolatry we see them together here in Ephesus and that's all it took to whip up these idol makers into a frenzy they were furious they began shouting great is Artemis of the Ephesians such commotion has a tendency to draw further attention and that's exactly what happened soon the whole city was thrown into an uproar and rushed we're told as one man into the theater

I like that language rushed as one man you ever been in a crowd a mob you don't choose where you want to go do you you rush as one man as the guy behind you is pushing you and you're pushing the one they all just rushed into the theater you can still see the remains of this theater it held 20,000 people in Paul's day it was total confusion some shouting one thing others shouting another but most not having a clue why they're even there that's mob violence that's an out of control confused mess and Paul wants to go and speak to the crowd but his friends even his unconverted friends in the city would not let him for fear of his life and so the unbelieving Jews were told pushed one of their men Alexander to the front to give a defense probably wanting to disassociate the Jews in town from this crazy sect called the way followers of Jesus to show that we Jews here in Ephesus had nothing to do with this recent trouble when the crowd realized that [44:58] Alexander was a Jew which by the way the Jews do not worship idols either no worshiper of Artemis they drowned him out and started shouting in unison for two hours great is Artemis of the Ephesians great is Artemis of the Ephesians can you hear the chant in this theater billowing out throughout the city great is Artemis of the Ephesians two hours of it brothers and sisters if idolaters can get this excited about praising a lifeless God what should be our enthusiasm as we sing the praises of the true and living God going to be here tonight to sing the praises of our dear redeemer who with his blood purchased us for God let us not be outdone by idolaters but come and praise our God for who he is not just coming to receive receive receive we come to praise our God we come to give him glory we come to say he is magnified he is worth worshipping he is worth all that I have that's why we come and we sing his praises they praise their dead

God for two hours mind you those worshippers of Baal on Carmel doesn't great is the Lord and greatly to be praised let's give him the praise he deserves well the city clerk was the leading city official and he was answerable to the Roman Empire for what happened in the city and he's nervous this is out of hand we could be in trouble if this news gets to the higher ups in Rome they will be asking what happened in Ephesus why the riot we could be in trouble and so with some flattery of Artemis and of Ephesus and warnings about trouble with Rome he succeeds in quieting the mob and sending the whole crowd home he says the courts are open if you want to press charges but it must be settled in a lawful assembly as it is we're in danger of being charged with rioting and so once again Paul and his companions were preserved by the kind providence of God spared another day to go and make the message of Jesus love known to more and more people but did you notice what the city clerk said men of Ephesus doesn't all the world know that the city of Ephesus is the guardian of the temple of the great

Artemis and of her image which fell from heaven therefore since these facts are undeniable you ought to be quiet and not do anything rash he speaks as if the heavenly origin of Artemis is an undeniable fact as if she's in no danger of Christianity she is an unconquerable goddess well let me just state the obvious that the majestic Artemis is now a forgotten name in history and her awesome temple lies in ruins destroyed by the Goths 200 years later she could not protect her temple a few pieces of broken pillars is all that's remaining scattered on the ground but the name of Jesus contrary to the name of Artemis the name of Jesus is still being magnified today and ever will be ever and forever shall his name endure until every knee bows and every tongue confesses that Jesus

Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father yes unlike the name of Artemis the name of Jesus is held in high honor and is magnified the world over today and as for the word of the Lord Jesus it too continues to spread widely and grow in power against all that opposes it and as for his temple it continues to grow one conversion at a time as God takes dead stones and unites them to the living stone Jesus Christ and is building this temple to the praise of Jesus Christ have you bowed your heart before this Lord Jesus Christ he's Lord that means the sovereign king of the whole universe his name is Jesus because he's a savior who saves his people from their sins he's the Christ that

means God's anointed savior the one authorized by heaven to come and save sinners seek him in his mercy and he will have mercy when the needy seek him he will mercy show now who is this Lord Jesus to you today what is he to you we pray in Jesus name don't we this name that was profaned in Ephesus you know that we could profane it here as we sing it as we pray it and we take it upon our lips the name of Jesus in Jesus name if we're not thinking of him as magnified and high and lifted up we can be dragging that name down so what is Jesus to you do you know him do you worship him do you follow him do you take his name upon your lips as we sing these hymns of Zion without any saving relationship to him no attachment to this savior that's like these seven sons of Sceva can you say he is my lord and savior or must you say he's my spouse's savior and lord he's my son or daughter's savior and lord he's my parents savior and lord at judgment he will say your parents i know your sons and daughters i know your brother and sister i know but who are you i never knew you depart from me you workers of iniquity we must know him by faith casting ourselves upon him and then let's learn from ephesus that demonic opposition to the gospel of Jesus comes in different forms yes it comes in the form of idolatry it's true that idols themselves are nothing they are no gods but the worship of idols Paul says is offered to demons it is participating with demons you don't see the demon you just see the dumb idol but behind it are demonic realities people are believing doctrines of demons Paul writes to Timothy down there at Ephesus doctrines of demons worshiping that is offered to demons and yes demonic forces would have us transfer our allegiance our trust our ultimate loyalty from God himself to anything else some object whether the statue of of

[52 : 34] Artemis or a crucifix of Jesus any object that we attach blessing to it's an idol and you can be sure that behind it are demonic entities who are seeking to pull people away from the worship of the Lord Jesus Christ who's not to be worshipped as we said in the second commandment through physical objects that's magic that's black magic and it's to have no place in the worship of God demons would replace God with other idols but secondly we see in Ephesus the more blatant form of demonic activity and sorcery and black magic we still have many today turning to their horoscopes to learn about their future turning to the stars seeking good luck with charms knocking on woods some superstitious ditty that they think will somehow bring blessing and ward off evil what a privilege to know as those saved by

Jesus Christ that the one who holds the future and everything in the universe is my father and nothing happens apart from his will and he loves me but Ephesus also showed us demonic opposition to the gospel through the unbelief of the Jews the god of this age that's Satan and his hellish crew the god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ who is the image of God I would say this is one of the most subtle forms of demonic activity today not out distracted from believing on Jesus blinding the mind so they see no glory in him showing them glory in other created things demons doing all they can to keep people neglecting Christ and refusing to surrender in faith to him and this is perhaps their greatest work of all since so many people don't even know it's them doing the work and an enemy has great advantage don't they remain hidden and unknown people feeling free

I don't feel like I've got a hook through my nose with a demon leading me I'm making my choices when all the way they are according to Paul's letter to the Ephesians chapter 2 they are following the ways of the world and of the ruler they're following the ways of the ruler of the kingdom of the air the spirit small s who is now at work in those who are disobedient if you've not trusted in Jesus you must know that there are evil spirits at work in those who are unbelieving and disobedient we do not wrestle with flesh and blood dear unconverted friend may you be awakened to reality this morning to know that there are supernatural entities working for your damnation to keep you distracted from coming to Jesus have they succeeded another week have they succeeded for seven days seven more days kept you from believing on Jesus

I ask you what do what have idols and demons and unbelief ever done for you they'll damn you oh but what is Jesus in love done for poor sinners become sin for them took the blame for them bore the curse of God's wrath for them that we might be forgiven come to this Jesus as he offers himself to you in the gospel let's pray our father in heaven thank you for another chapter in the life of Jesus building his church thank you for taking us right into this city of Ephesus a city under the powers of darkness and showing us that there is power in Jesus name to set people free from their idols their superstition their sorcery but even more from their unbelief and their stubbornness and refusal to believe thank you that you honored the name and word of the Lord

Jesus Christ in Ephesus thank you that you are still honoring his name and word today do so all around the world and please do it in our hearts here we ask in Jesus name and thank you that he is magnified amen Thank you.