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Acts 19:23-41

Acts 20:1-38

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Exegetical Study

1. **Acts 19:23-41** – *“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. 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 worshiped throughout the province of Asia and the world, will be robbed of her divine majesty.’ When they heard this, they were furious and began shouting: ‘Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!’ 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 did not even know why they were there. The Jews pushed Alexander to the front, and some of the crowd shouted instructions to him. 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 proconsuls. 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.' After he had said this, he dismissed the assembly."

a. The Riot in Ephesus

- i. Demetrius' appeal was based on money and national pride.
- ii. The population of Ephesus was between 300,000 and 500,000 people, so even though not every person was involved, there would still have been many thousands of people involved, making the riot significant!
- iii. Gaius and Aristarchus were dragged into the theater in Ephesus, which seated 25,000 people.
- iv. Alexander was the spokesman for the Jews, and his message was basically, 'We are Jews, and we have nothing to do with Paul or the Way!'
- v. Alexander's message sent the mob into an even greater rage and confused state, causing the Ephesians to shout *"in unison for about two hours: 'Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!'"*

2. **Acts 20:1-6** - *"When the uproar had ended, Paul sent for the disciples and, after encouraging them, said good-bye and set out for Macedonia. He traveled through that area, speaking many words of encouragement to the people, and finally arrived in Greece, where he stayed three months. Because the Jews made a plot against him just as he was about to sail for Syria, he decided to go back through Macedonia. He was accompanied by Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, Timothy also, and Tychicus and Trophimus from the province of Asia. These men went on ahead and waited for us at Troas. But we sailed from Philippi after the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and five days later joined the others at Troas, where we stayed seven days."*

a. The Journey and the Ministry

- i. Luke was once again a member of Paul's ministry team.
 1. **Acts 20:6** - *"But **we** sailed from Philippi..."* (Emphasis added)
 2. Other we/us verses in the book of Acts include: **Acts 16:10-17**; **20:5-15**; **21:1-18**; **27:1-37**; and **28:1-16**.

3. **Acts 20:7-12** - *"On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight. There were many lamps in the upstairs room where we were meeting. Seated in a window was a young man named Eutychus, who was sinking*

into a deep sleep as Paul talked on and on. When he was sound asleep, he fell to the ground from the third story and was picked up dead. Paul went down, threw himself on the young man and put his arms around him. 'Don't be alarmed,' he said. 'He's alive!' Then he went upstairs again and broke bread and ate. After talking until daylight, he left. The people took the young man home alive and were greatly comforted."

a. Eutychus was raised from the dead!

i. Pastor Gary said, "[Eutychus] didn't get the wind knocked out of him. [He fell out of a window on the third floor and he died.] This is a miracle, so don't overlook the miracle, thinking [that Paul did CPR]. ... [Paul] was schooled in the Scriptures, so you know that he was thinking, 'This is what Elijah did and this is what Elisha did, so I'm going to follow the model of how God [did] miracles in the Old Testament.' "

ii. This miracle is similar to the accounts of Elijah and Elisha.

1. Elijah - [1 Kings 17:17-24](#) - *"Some time later the son of the woman who owned the house became ill. He grew worse and worse, and finally stopped breathing. She said to Elijah, 'What do you have against me, man of God? Did you come to remind me of my sin and kill my son?' 'Give me your son,' Elijah replied. He took him from her arms, carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his bed. Then he cried out to the LORD, 'O LORD my God, have you brought tragedy also upon this widow I am staying with, by causing her son to die?' Then he stretched himself out on the boy three times and cried to the LORD, 'O LORD my God, let this boy's life return to him!' The LORD heard Elijah's cry, and the boy's life returned to him, and he lived. Elijah picked up the child and carried him down from the room into the house. He gave him to his mother and said, 'Look, your son is alive!' Then the woman said to Elijah, 'Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the LORD from your mouth is the truth.' "*

2. Elisha - [2 Kings 4:18-37](#) - *"The child grew, and one day he went out to his father, who was with the reapers. 'My head! My head!' he said to his father. His father told a servant, 'Carry him to his mother.' After the servant had lifted him up and carried him to his mother, the boy sat on her lap until noon and then he died. She went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, then shut the door and went out. She called her husband and said, 'Please send me one of the servants and a donkey so I can go to the man of God quickly and return.' ... She saddled the donkey and said to her servant, 'Lead on; don't slow down for me unless I tell you.' So she set out and came to the man of God at Mount*

Carmel. When he saw her in the distance, the man of God said to his servant Gehazi, 'Look! There's the Shunammite! Run to meet her and ask her, 'Are you all right? Is your husband all right? Is your child all right?' 'Everything is all right,' she said. When she reached the man of God at the mountain, she took hold of his feet. Gehazi came over to push her way, but the man of God said, 'Lever her alone! She is in bitter distress, but the LORD has hidden it from me and has not told me why.' ... Elisha said to Gehazi, 'Tuck your cloak into your belt, take my staff in your hand and run. If you meet anyone, do not greet him, and if anyone greets you, do not answer. Lay my staff on the boy's face.' But the child's mother said, 'As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you.' So he got up and followed her. Gehazi went on ahead and laid the staff on the boy's face, but there was no sound or response. So Gehazi went back to meet Elisha and told him, 'The boy has not awakened.' When Elisha reached the house, there was the boy lying dead on his couch. He went in, shut the door on the two of them and prayed to the LORD. Then he got on the bed and lay upon the boy, mouth to mouth, eyes to eyes, hands to hands. As he stretched himself out upon him, the boy's body grew warm. Elisha turned away and walked back and forth in the room and then got on the bed and stretched out upon him once more. The boy sneezed seven times and opened his eyes. Elisha summoned Gehazi and said, 'Call the Shunammite.' And he did. When she came, he said, 'Take your son.' She came in, fell at his feet and bowed to the ground. Then she took her son and went out."

4. **Acts 20:13-38** - *"We went on ahead to the ship and sailed for Assos, where we were going to take Paul aboard. He had made this arrangement because he was going there on foot. When he met us at Assos, we took him aboard and went on to Mitylene. The next day we set sail from there and arrived at Kios. The day after that we crossed over to Samos, and on the following day arrived at Miletus. Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus to avoid spending time in the province of Asia, for he was in a hurry to reach Jerusalem, if possible, by the day of Pentecost. From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church. When they arrived, he said to them: 'You know how I lived the whole time I was with you, from the first day I came into the province of Asia. I served the Lord with great humility and with tears, although I was severely tested by the plots of the Jews. You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house. I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus. And now,*

compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me there. However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me - the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace. Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again. Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God. Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears. Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I have not coveted anyone's silver or gold or clothing. You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' When he had said this, he knelt down with all of them and prayed. They all wept as they embraced him and kissed him. What grieved them most was his statement that they would never see his face again. Then they accompanied him to the ship."

a. Paul's farewell message to the Ephesian elders

- i. Paul bypassed Ephesus and made his way to Miletus, a journey of about fifty miles.
- ii. Paul sent word to the elders in Ephesus to meet him in Miletus.
- iii. Paul basically told the elders that his life was an open book, and they were welcome to examine his life because he wanted them to know that he had tried to follow the example of Christ.

1. Pastor Gary said, "When I read [Paul's] parting words to these elders from Ephesus, it's challenging to me... [How] many of us would be able to say with such a clear conscience, 'Just examine every part of my life; I'm an open book.'? ... [Paul reminded them that he lived among them for two years, and there wasn't anything he had done that was hidden. There was no secret life with Paul. His public life was public, and his private life was his public life.]

a. **1 Corinthians 11:1** - *"Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ."*

iv. **Acts 20:18-27** provides a summary of Paul's ministry.

v. Pastor Gary said, "[Paul's life was] an awesome example of a life that

is surrendered and is not too concerned about self, but more concerned about the Lord. ... It doesn't matter how well you started. It matters how well you finish. If you came to Christ after you were forty or fifty or sixty or seventy... you [need] to realize it's all about finishing. ... It doesn't really matter how early or how well you start; it matters how you finish. Paul, himself, didn't get a great start. Remember, he [condoned the death of Stephen, and] he was holding the cloaks of those who were throwing stones!¹ ... He was a very zealous Jew of the tribe of Benjamin, [which] was a great pedigree. ... He was a party to murdering Christians. ... [Now, he wanted it to be clearly understood that his only goal in life was to finish well!] ... [The Christian life] is not a sprint; it is a marathon. ... It is a race of perseverance."

vi. [Acts 20:28-35](#) provides the account of Paul's exhortation about their ministry.

1. Keep watch over yourselves and over the flock.
 - a. Pastor Gary said, "If pastors and leaders don't give attention to their own spiritual lives, they will be of no use in trying to give attention to the spiritual lives of the flock. ... Ideally, ministry happens out of the overflow of one's relationship with Christ. It's not just true about me as a pastor; it's true about you. If you want to be effective in the life of someone else to minister to them, [that] will ultimately and ideally happen as an overflow of the relationship you have with Jesus. You can't offer someone something that you don't have yourself. It is important for all of us to spend time at the feet of Jesus..."
2. Be shepherds of the church of God which was bought with his blood.
 - a. Pastor Gary said, "It is God's Church, and he spilled his blood for the sake of the Church. ... No pastor can say, 'It's my flock and these are my people.' ... I think Paul said this as a warning, [so they would remember whose Church it really is]."
 - i. [Psalm 95:7](#) - *"For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand."*
 - ii. [Psalm 100:3](#) - *"Know that the LORD, He is God; it is He who made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people and the sheep of His pasture."*
3. Be on your guard for persecution from without and division from within.
 - a. There have been and there will always be people who hate

¹ [Acts 7:54-60](#)

- Christianity, Christians, freedom of religion in America, etc.
- b. Pastor Gary said, “There will be people who love the Church, some who will tolerate the Church, and some people who will be downright hostile to the Church, and that is just reality.”
 - c. There have been and there will always be people in churches who live their lives not according to the Spirit but according to their flesh.
 - d. Pastor Gary said, “I can say to the glory of God that we’ve never had a church split... I can tell you that there have been [many] churches that no longer exist today because there were a few from within who decided [they] were going to do their own thing, and they [drew] people away... completely dividing the church. ... [God hates someone who sows discord.]”
 - i. **Proverbs 6:16-19** - *“These six things the LORD hates, yes, seven are an abomination to Him: a proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that are swift in running to evil, a false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren.”*

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the 1984 New International Version (NIV)