

Our **GUIDE**

for little ones

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IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

Lesson 76

A Riot in Ephesus

Acts 19:21 - 20:1

In the city of Ephesus there was a beautiful building — one of the most beautiful buildings in the whole world. It was made of pure white marble. People from all over the country, and even from *outside* the country, came to visit it.

The building was a *temple*. And in it was an *image* — a very *special* image. This image, the people believed, had long ago fallen from the *sky*. It had come from *Jupiter*, the *king of the gods*. And it landed right in *Ephesus*.

Yes, the people really *believed* that. And the people of Ephesus were very *proud* of it. They had been honored by Jupiter himself. This was *their special goddess* — the goddess Diana. It was for *her* that this beautiful temple was built. It was because of *her* that people came from far



and near to visit this beautiful building.

And when they were in Ephesus and at the temple, people bought little trinkets, little models of the temple and of the image of Diana. They wanted to have Diana right in their homes. The little trinkets were *expensive*, because they were made of *silver*. But they were *worth* it, if they would bring good luck to the people who had them.

That was the religion, the superstition, of the people of that day. And because of it the silversmiths, who made the little trinkets, were getting *rich*. For

Note to Parents: These papers are intended for the younger Sunday School students — grade 3 and below. Vocabulary and concepts are such that children in this age group, even the 3rd graders, will profit most if the stories are read *to* them, not *by* them. Most lessons have two stories, for two sittings if that proves to be beneficial. Our hope is that parents will find these lessons to be useful tools in the teaching of Bible stories and Bible truths to their children in the “off” season.

the silversmiths, the superstition of the people meant ... *money*.

In and around Ephesus, however, there was one group of people who did not go to that temple. And they did not buy the trinkets. The *Christians!*

And who do you think *noticed* that? The *silversmiths*. They noticed that they were not making quite as much *money* as they did before — because fewer people were buying their little silver trinkets. And it was all *Paul's* fault. Paul, they thought, must be *stopped*.

It was a silversmith by the name of Demetrius who started it all. He called together all of the other silversmiths and explained to them the problem. “You know,” he said to them, “that we make our living by selling these silver trinkets. Well, there’s this Jew by the name of Paul. Not only in Ephesus but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul has turned away much people, saying that they be no gods that are made with hands. And those people are no longer buying our trinkets!”

So is it just a matter of ... *money*? “Oh, no,” said Demetrius. “Not only this our *craft* is in danger to be set at naught, but also the *temple of the great goddess Diana* is being despised, whom all Asia and the world worshipeth.”

That was enough for the silversmiths. They were all filled with anger. And they began shouting, “Great is Diana of the Ephesians.”

They spilled out into the streets.

Still shouting. Other people joined them.



These people didn’t know what it was all about, but they knew that Diana was *their* goddess and that she was *great*. So they shouted right along with the silversmiths.

“Great is Diana of the Ephesians!” Soon the whole city was filled with confusion.

Only the silversmiths knew what it was all about. It was about *Paul*. They didn’t know where he was. But they managed to catch Gaius and



Aristarchus, two friends of Paul.

And then, with these two captives in hand, the whole howling mob surged toward the town “theater” — the center of town.

It didn’t take long at all before Paul heard that the whole city was in an uproar — over *him*. And that Gaius and Aristarchus had been seized by the mob. Paul got ready right away to *go to the theater*. For the sake of his two friends, he was ready to face that whole mob. But his friends said, “No. Don’t go.” Who knows what this angry, howling, senseless mob would do if they could get their hands on *Paul*. By going to the theater, Paul could very well make matters a lot *worse*. So Paul stayed away.

In the theater, meanwhile, there was a *riot*. The shouting mob was demanding that something be done about this man Paul. *What* should be done? or *why?* — most of the people had no idea. They knew only that it had something to

do with their goddess and her temple — and that Paul was a *Jew*.

Yes, Paul was a *Jew*. How dare the *Jews* do or say anything against the great *Diana*? Down with the *Jews*!

There were *Jews* in this mob. They saw what was going on. To them, it was quite all right that the mob was after *Paul*. But now the mob is blaming the *Jews* for what *Paul* did. The *Jews* didn't like that. Somehow the mob must be told that it's not the *Jews* but the *Christians* who are to blame.

So the *Jews* made their way to the front. One of them, a man by the name of Alexander, stepped forward. He raised his hand to ask for silence, so that he could speak to the multitude. And maybe things did start quieting down a little. But then somebody shouted, "He's a *Jew*!" And that was all that *this* mob needed to know. Everybody knew that *Jews* didn't worship *Diana*. "Great is *Diana* of the *Ephesians*," they cried. Not one word would they hear from this *Jew*.

And, would you believe, they kept shouting ... for *two hours*. They must have shouted themselves *hoarse*. For when the townclerk (what we would probably call the mayor of the city) stepped up, the people were ready to quiet down. They listened as the townclerk told them that they were acting *foolishly*. Everyone in *Ephesus*, he said, *knows* that *Diana* is great. So why keep shouting *that*? Besides, the townclerk

said, you have brought here *Gaius* and *Aristarchus*, two men who have done nothing wrong.

And, too, the townclerk had found out who was responsible for this day's uproar. It was *Demetrius* and the *silversmiths*. If you have a charge against any man, the townclerk told them, there are *right ways* to bring them. And starting a *riot* is not one of them.

The townclerk then dismissed the multitude. He sent them away. We suspect that they went quietly — and that *Demetrius* and the *silversmiths* were the first ones out the door.

So, in spite of all of the uproar, *Paul* was not hurt. But the whole city had been stirred up *against him*. That would not be good for the *church*. *Paul* knew that. So he called together his *Christian* friends in *Ephesus*, said farewell, and departed to go into *Macedonia*.

How Well Did You Listen?

1. What special thing was in the famous white temple in *Ephesus*?
2. What did the visitors to that temple often buy?
3. What group of people in *Ephesus* did not visit that beautiful temple?
4. What group of people in *Ephesus* did not like it that the *Christians* didn't go to the temple?
5. Who finally got the mob in the theater to quiet down and go home?
6. What did *Paul* do after the riot was over?

Paul Looks to Rome

Acts 20:2-12

After the riot in Ephesus, Paul left the city and headed again for Macedonia. You remember Macedonia, don't you? Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea — those are the cities that Paul visited in Macedonia. Paul wants to go there again, to see how the young churches are doing, and to help them in any way that he can.

On the way to Macedonia Paul stopped in Troas. He had been there before. But then he was only passing through. Now, a few years later, Paul stays for a while, and he starts a church also in this city. After leaving Troas, he went to



Macedonia. And after making visits to the churches in Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea, he went on to Greece, to the city of Corinth. For three months he stayed there. And during that time he preached. He taught. He made plans for the future. And he wrote a book.

The book he wrote is in our Bibles. It's the book of *Romans*. Paul wrote it as a *letter*, an *epistle*, to the saints who lived in *Rome*. And in that letter he wrote about his plans for the future.

What *were* those plans? To go to Rome, Paul said, on his way to *Spain*!

That's really amazing. Just think of what Paul had already done. He had preached in city after city, country after country — till he had started churches in *half of the Roman Empire*. So what does he do now? Does he decide to rest up a bit, and to settle down in, say, Philippi? No, this tireless apostle makes immediately plans to go and preach in the *other half of the empire*.

And that would start, he said, in the city of Rome, the capital of the Roman Empire. Christianity had already come to the capital — carried there most likely by friends of Paul, by people who had been *taught* by Paul. At the end of his letter to the Romans, Paul greets *twenty-four* of those friends by name. You will surely recognize the two names at the top of the list. They were tentmakers. Yes, Aquila and Priscilla had moved to Rome, and were surely looking forward to the arrival of their friend and teacher.

What, then, would Paul *do* in Rome? Most likely the same thing he did in Ephesus, in the school of Tyrannus. Do you remember that? He taught men to be preachers, so that he could send them out to all the cities of Asia. In Rome he would do the same, so that the gospel could sweep *westward* — all the way to Spain, at the far end of the Roman Empire.

Those were *Paul's* plans. As we will see later, the *Lord* had different plans. And that reminds us of this great, glorious truth, that it is not *man* but

Christ who builds the church. It might look as if *Paul* was building the church. *He* traveled. *He* preached. *He* taught. *He* suffered. But, like a farmer, he can do no more than *plant*. Only *God* can make the seed *grow*. That's what Paul told the Corinthians: "I have planted, Apollos watered; but *God* gave the increase." The amazing spread of Christianity by the preaching of Paul in a few short years ... was the work of *God*.

The unbelieving Jews thought it was the work of *Paul*. Christian churches were springing up everywhere — wherever *Paul* went. The Jews *hated* that. Especially the Jews in *Jerusalem*. Paul knew that. Nevertheless, he decided to make a trip to Jerusalem first, before he traveled to Rome. The Christians in Macedonia and Greece and Asia had taken collections, they had raised money, for the poor Christians in Jerusalem. And Paul wanted to deliver that gift. "Please pray for me," Paul wrote to the Romans, "that I may be kept safe from my enemies in Jerusalem."

As it turned out, Paul's enemies tried to get him even before he sailed away from Greece. The Jews in *Corinth* plotted to kill him. Paul heard about it, and he quickly changed his plans. He took a different ship. Instead of sailing from *Greece*, he walked all the way back to Macedonia and sailed from there.



This ship didn't sail straight for Jerusalem. It stopped first at Troas. Paul had a week to visit with the Chris-

tians in that city. The last day of his stay in Troas was a Sunday. So Paul worshiped with them, and he *preached* for them. It was an evening worship service. And, because he had so much to tell them, Paul kept right on preaching. 10 o'clock. 11 o'clock. Finally *midnight*. And the people didn't mind that a bit.

But one young man, Eutychus by name, started at last to get sleepy. He was sitting, not in a chair, but on a windowsill in this upper room. And when he dozed off, he fell out of the window — a window on the *third floor*. That was a *long fall*. The people rushed down, and to their great grief they found that Eutychus was *dead*.



Everyone was stunned by this sudden death. We can imagine the weeping and the crying. But then Paul came down. He laid himself, his own body, on the lifeless body of Eutychus. And the young man *revived*.

An astounding miracle it was. We can be sure that Paul told them who had *done* it. Eutychus was raised in the name, and by the power, of ... *Jesus*. The Jesus whom *Paul preached*.

So what did the people do next? Did they hug Eutychus, thank Paul, and then head for home, and to bed, since it was already after midnight? No, they went back upstairs and listened more to Paul ... till the sun came up! Did they believe everything he said? Well, how could they



not believe — with Eutychus sitting there among them ... alive!

How Well Did You Listen?

1. To what great city did Paul decide to go next, after finishing his work in Greece?
2. What did Paul want to bring to Jerusalem before going to Rome?
3. How did it happen that a young man died while Paul was preaching in Troas? What did Paul then do?

How Well Do You Understand?

1. Why was Demetrius upset that Christians didn't go to the temple of Diana? What man did Demetrius blame for this?
2. Why did the mob in the theater refuse even to let Alexander talk to them?
3. Why did Paul leave Ephesus when the uproar was over?
4. What, most likely, did Paul plan to do in Rome?

5. Paul wanted to go first to Jerusalem. Why would that be an especially dangerous trip?

6. What happened in Troas that would help the people of that city believe the gospel that Paul preached?

Memory Verse

Acts 19:28b “Great is Diana of the Ephesians.”

Follow the dots with numbers and dots with letters to draw a map.
Color the map.

