

“PREACHING CAN CAUSE RIOTS!!!!” 10 / 15 / 17

Acts 19: 23-31 (NIV) (Was SERM_303, 9/22/96; Was “*PREACHING CHRIST CAUSES RIOTS!!!!*”)
(Was Sermon 765, 10/5/03; 1066, 10/7/07; 1465, 10/28/12)

INTRODUCTION — A PASTOR was called once by an I.R.S. AGENT, and asked about a \$10,000 CONTRIBUTION claimed by a WELL-TO-DO CHURCH MEMBER.

“DID HE REALLY GIVE THAT MUCH??” Asked the I.R.S. agent.

The PASTOR thought for a second, and replied: “I’D RATHER NOT SAY RIGHT NOW, BUT IF YOU’LL CALL ME BACK TOMORROW, I’M SURE THE ANSWER WILL BE ‘YES’!!” PEOPLE RE-BELL against the Govt. sometimes. . . .

THIS SINFUL WORLD lives in REBELLION to and DISOBEDIENCE to GOD, and the GOSPEL of JESUS CHRIST challenges and threatens the order of THIS WORLD. JESUS DEMANDS OBEDIENCE only to GOD, and INSISTS that we worship NO ONE ELSE! This defies the wishes and practices of many people in the world, and THEREFORE making a STAND FOR CHRIST can sometimes be very risky. Look at what happened to PAUL....

I. WHAT PAUL FACED —

A. PAUL PREACHED ABOUT JESUS—

1. AND as we saw LAST WEEK, many people were WON TO CHRIST, and MANY WERE HEALED by the POWER OF GOD through PAUL.
2. "WHO WOULD COMPLAIN ABOUT THAT??" you may ask.

B. PAUL'S PREACHING ABOUT JESUS CHRIST INCLUDED WORDS LIKE:

1. “NO ONE IS LORD and GOD EXCEPT JESUS!!”
2. “THESE STATUES and GREEK gods and goddesses are just STONES! THEY’RE ROCKS! THEY DON’T REALLY EXIST!!”

C. YOU SEE— the CITY of EPHESUS, where PAUL preached, had the:

1. TEMPLE of ARTEMIS the GODDESS. (DIANA in LATIN & K.J.V.)

2. This TEMPLE— *one of the SEVEN WONDERS of the ANCIENT WORLD.*
 3. The STATUE of ARTEMIS was made from a METEORITE that had fallen to EARTH a THOUSAND YEARS BEFORE. Many people thought the STATUE was **“SENT BY THE GODS!!”**
 4. ARTEMIS was seen as the goddess who gave FERTILITY— to the LAND, and also to WOMEN!
 5. FARMERS who wanted GOOD CROPS— WORSHIPED and SACRIFICED to ARTEMIS.
 7. WOMEN— WHO WANTED TO HAVE A BABY— WORSHIPED and SACRIFICED TO ARTEMIS!!
 8. ADD to THIS that the *FESTIVAL of ARTEMIS* was an EXCUSE for WILD ORGIES and CAROUSING in EPHEBUS.
 9. ARTEMIS was a POWERFUL PAGAN SYMBOL of WORSHIP in ASIA MINOR
- D. AND— MANY PEOPLE MADE a GOOD LIVING from the TEMPLE of ARTEMIS
1. SOME MADE and SOLD: LITTLE COPIES of the TEMPLE OF ARTEMIS,
 2. OR SHRINES, or COPIES OF THE STATUE OF ARTEMIS THE GODDESS.
 3. AND THESE STATUES and TRINKETS WERE NOT JUST BOUGHT BY PEOPLE AS KEEPSAKES!!
 4. AS STRANGE AS IT MAY SEEM TO US, PEOPLE for THOUSANDS OF MILES around EPHEBUS WORSHIPED ARTEMIS.
 6. SO the SILVERSMITHS and the TEMPLE of ARTEMIS made a **HEALTHY PROFIT OFF** selling those little STATUES and TRINKETS.
- E. BY PREACHING DEVOTION ONLY to JESUS CHRIST: Paul challenged—
1. – the people of EPHEBUS to stop spending their MONEY on this false "GODDESS."
 2. The RESULT: BUSINESS DRIED UP!! The ARTISANS and SILVERSMITHS who made BIG BUCKS in selling to the **“CULT of ARTEMIS”** were ANGRY at PAUL for shrinking their income—
 3. SO THEY STARTED A RIOT !! (read vv. 32-34)
 5. ALEXANDER WAS a JEWISH CONVERT to CHRIST, and may have

been “PUSHED to the FRONT” by the JEWISH PEOPLE to explain that the PAUL’S PREACHING did not REPRESENT the JEWISH COMMUNITY of EPHESUS.

6. OF COURSE, THE JEWISH PEOPLE WERE ALSO STRICT BELIEVERS IN ONE GOD— the GOD OF ISRAEL— JUST LIKE CHRISTIANS! THAT’S PROBABLY WHY the EPHESIAN CROWD MIXED JEWISH PEOPLE IN WITH PAUL’S GROUP.

7. BUT, TO THE CROWD, PAUL and the CHRISTIANS were JUST OTHER KINDS OF JEWS— and they shouted ALEXANDER down.

8. BY the GRACE of GOD, the “RIOT” CAME TO NOTHING— the CITY CLERK was probably a ROMAN PROCONSUL (a ROMAN JUDGE), and REASONED with the CROWD, and got them to DISPERSE.

F. SO WHAT??? You might think. “THAT WAS A LONG TIME AGO, IN A PLACE FAR, FAR AWAY...”

1. DO CHRISTIANS FACE the SAME ATTITUDES TODAY????

2. I THINK SO. LET ME TELL A FEW STORIES. YOU DECIDE.

II. WATCH OUT FOR FALSE GODS TODAY!

A. I RECEIVED A NEWSLETTER a few years ago from MY GOOD FRIEND, BRUCE PRIVATSKY, and he asked us NOT to COPY his LETTER, or PRINT HIS LOCATION in, when he was in KAZAKHSTAN — because of the possibility that FUNDAMENTALIST MUSLIMS WOULD KILL THEM.

D. MAKING a STAND for CHRIST and HIS TEACHINGS OFTEN MEANS HARD-SHIPS—

3. MAKING A STAND FOR CHRIST SOMETIMES RESULTS in CHRISTIANS PAYING A HIGH PRICE— *EVEN IN THIS MODERN WORLD!*

E. EVEN IN THE U.S.A., THINGS ARE NOT PERFECT.

1. JUST ASK HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS who live in the PRESSURE COOKER of SENIOR HIGH, WHERE PEER PRESSURE and DEMANDS for

PERFORMANCE IN SO MANY THINGS ARE SO HIGH—

2. MANY TIMES, IT IS JUST NOT POPULAR TO BE A CHRISTIAN AND
STAND UP FOR CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES....

F. OR— look at the MANY MILLIONS of DOLLARS SPENT EACH YEAR—

1. — on the “*CULTS*” of DEAD MOVIE STARS— the “*CULT*” of ELVIS
PRESLEY, the “*CULT*” of MARILYN MONROE, or the “*CULT*” of
JAMES DEAN. The ESTATES OF THESE STARS, WHO HAVE BEEN
DEAD for 20 or 30 YEARS or more, MAKE MORE MONEY THAN ANY
OF THEM MADE IN THEIR LIFETIMES!!!

2. **WHAT’S WRONG WITH THAT?!?! Maybe nothing, EXCEPT that the**
MILLIONS of DOLLARS SPENT EACH YEAR ON THESE MOVIE
STAR TRINKETS COULD GO INSTEAD to CHURCHES to HELP
SPREAD the GOOD NEWS of JESUS CHRIST, or to HELP
THOUSANDS of the POOR and the HOMELESS. **YOU SEE —**

G. — IF JESUS REALLY IS LORD of OUR LIVES, HE MAY LEAD US
to make some CHANGES in our PRIORITIES, and GIVE UP some
things in our lives as UNWORTHY for a CHRISTIAN to be
INVOLVED IN, or to SPEND OUR MONEY ON.

CONCLUSION — WHAT ARE THOSE WAYS in which we can AVOID
FALSE GODS, and SERVE the LORD GLADLY and FULLY??

ONE of my GOOD FRIENDS when I was in school in California — JEFF
LAVENDER — his FATHER was the SENIOR PASTOR of FIRST BAPTIST
CHURCH in BAKERSFIELD, CALIF. ONE SUNDAY, Dr. Lavender made an
appeal in church for a great and worthy cause, and a certain woman, a member of the
church, came to him and handed him a check for \$50, asking at the same time if
her gift was satisfactory. Dr. Lavender immediately replied, “**If it represents you.**”

There was a moment of soul-searching thought and she asked to have the check returned
to her. She left with it and a day or two later she returned handing the pastor a check for \$5,000
and again asked the same question, “**Is my gift satisfactory?**” Dr. Lavender gave the

same answer as before, **“If it represents you.”** As before, a truth seemed to be driving deeply. **After a few moments of hesitation she took back the check and left.**

Later in the week she came again with a check. That time it was for \$50,000. As she placed it in the pastor's hand, she said, **“After earnest, prayerful thought, I have come to the conclusion that this gift does represent me, and I am happy to give it.”**

WHAT MIGHT YOU GIVE to the LORD — whether of MATERIAL WORTH, or of your TIME and TALENTS — THAT GIVES YOU CONFIDENCE that you are FAITHFULLY SERVING the LORD GLADLY and FULLY?!?! THAT YOU ARE MAKING a FIRM STAND for JESUS CHRIST?!??