

Heart without a home -- but Christ

But to me, to live is Christ, to die is gain Phil.1:21

Study 20a: RELIGION THAT HONOURS PROFITS, NOT PROPHETS (19:21-41)

19:21-28 Artemis (Roman Diana) may have been worshipped by the whole world, but with what is her worship obviously compatible? (cf. 16:16,19)

(1) The month of May these people called the Artemisian, because it was the month devoted to these great religious assemblies in honour of Artemis; and the gatherings were described as the Ephesia. The picture is full of life and colour. Vast crowds were gathered together for worship. The theatre into which they crowded, taking with them the two travelling companions of Paul, was capable of seating 20 or 30,000 people. These facts help us to understand the commotion of the city. **G. Campbell Morgan** *Acts of the Apostles* p.358

(2) Most of the crowd had no idea what they were demonstrating about (19:32) -- which is too often true of pure "democracy." **William Sanford LaSor** *Church Alive* p.296

19:29-41 What is Luke anxious to stress about Paul's relationship with officialdom? (are Christians iconoclasts?)

(3) As at Athens, Paul did not attack by naming names. He drove home principles that undercut the foundations of false religions and philosophies. **William Sanford LaSor** *op.cit.*, p.298

(4) They had not robbed the temples ... neither have they spoken ill of Diana. **J Stifler**, *Acts* p.196

(5) They had no time to abuse the silver shrines; no time to make a public protest. A great phrase of Dr. Chalmers describes their condition: "the expulsive power of a new affection." This is the one way of victory if the Church is to win real victories. They are won by the new, devitalizing the old; by the rising of a new life within men and women which triumphs over all other desires. In America there grows a wonderful tree called the scrub-oak. Travelling through the country in the springtime we see this scrub-oak, covered still with leaves of last year. Every other tree is stripped by the tempest of the autumn and winter. But gradually, in the springtime, the leaves drop off the scrub-oak,



ARTEMIS of the EPHESIANS -- MOTHER GODDESS of ASIA

Ephesian Artemis was a very different goddess from the "queen and huntress, chaste and fair" whom the Greeks venerated by this name; she was in origin the ancient mother goddess of Asia Minor, worshipped in that land from time immemorial as the mother of gods and men. Her temple at Ephesus was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world; her image, enshrined in that temple, was believed to be of heavenly workmanship: it appears to have been a meteorite in which the semblance of a many breasted female was discerned ... The Ephesian goddess was portrayed as many-breasted ... as embodying the nourishing capacity of nature. **F.F. Bruce** *Acts* pp.397,398

by the rising of the new life. That which the tempest from without never accomplishes the rising of life within does accomplish. The rustling of the leaves seems to laugh at the storm, but when the new life rises, then quietly and surely they drop off. That was the victory in Ephesus. There was no demonstration against idolatry ... **G. Campbell Morgan** *op. cit.*, p.360

Study 20b: LAST JOURNEYS OF THIRD TOUR (20:1-16)

20:1-7 'In perils often' (2 Cor. 11:26), but in the comfort of Christian companions

(6) I notice two things; the apostle's rest; and the apostle's restlessness. What were the secrets of the restfulness of this man? He was a man, mastered by Christ, having no motive other than that of such mastery, having cut himself completely adrift from every other tie that binds the human heart ... "Regions beyond," was his perpetual watchword; the uttermost part of the earth marked the limit of his endeavour. Restful in Christ, he was yet restless in his devotion to service of Christ. **G. Campbell Morgan** *op. cit.*, pp.366,367

(7) The breaking of bread is the term used especially in Acts for the celebration of the Lord's Supper (2:42; cf. 1 Cor. 10:16), and this passage is of particular interest in providing the first allusion to the Christian custom of meeting *on the first day of the week* for the purpose. **I. Howard Marshall** *The Acts of the Apostles* p.325

20:8-12 Comfort for sleep-inducing preachers, or apostolic credentials? (9:36-42)

20:13-16 Why was Paul hastening?

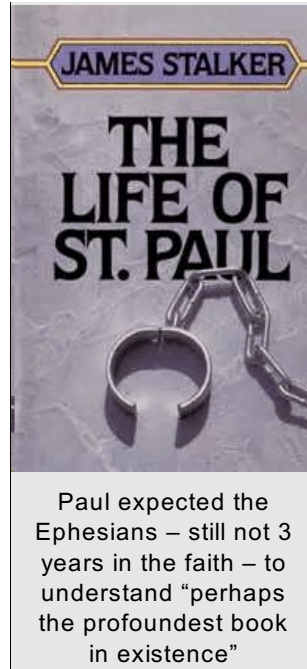
Exhorting the Ephesian Elders

Study 21a: THE BRANDMARKS OF A SLAVE OF CHRIST (20:17-27)

1. **HUMBLE SERVICE** (vv.18,19)

2. **TEARS AND TRIALS** (vv.19,22,23)

(1) Just as the sermon in the synagogue at Pisidian Antioch (Ch.13:16ff.) is a sample of Paul's approach to synagogue audiences, and his speeches at Lystra (Ch.14:15ff.) and Athens (Ch.17:22ff.) are samples of his approach to pagan audiences, so we may say that this Milesian speech is a sample of his ministry to Christian audiences. But it is more than the sort of thing that Paul was accustomed to say to Christian audiences; it is plain that Luke was present when this speech was delivered (cf. Ch.21:1), and there is every reason to believe that Luke is here giving the gist of what he remembered hearing Paul say on this particular occasion. This speech is mainly hortatory, but also in some degree apologetic. It seems to be implied here and there that Paul's adversaries in the province of Asia had been prejudicing his converts against him in his absence; he therefore defends his teaching and general behaviour by appealing to his hearers' personal knowledge of him. **F.F. Bruce** *The Book of the Acts* p.413



understand it. If the orations of Demosthenes, with their closely packed arguments, between whose articulations even a knife cannot thrust, be a monument of the intellectual greatness of the Greece which listened to them with pleasure; if the plays of Shakespeare, with their deep views of life and their obscure and complex language, be a testimony to the strength of mind of the Elizabethan Age, which could enjoy such solid fare in a place of entertainment; then the Epistle to the Ephesians, which sounds the lowest depths of Christian experience, is a testimony to the proficiency which Paul's converts had attained under his preaching in Ephesus. **James Stalker** *Life of St. Paul* p.102

4. **PREACHES RADICAL, REPENTANT FAITH** (v.21)

5. **GRACE-CENTRED MINISTRY** (v.24)

(3) This message of the free bounty of God is the word which has the greatest effect on the heart of man ... **R.B. Rackham** *Acts* p.395

3. **COUNSEL COMPREHENSIVE & COMPLETE** (vv.20,25,27 -- note 'kingdom' embraces whole, cf.19:8)

(2) We have a monument of his success in the churches lying all around Ephesus which St. John addressed a few years afterwards in the Apocalypse; for they were probably the indirect fruit of Paul's labors. But we have a far more astonishing monument of it in the Epistle to the Ephesians. This is perhaps the profoundest book in existence; yet its author evidently expected the Ephesians to

6. **STEWARDS SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY, URGENCY** (vv.18,19,24-27)

7. **SELF-SACRIFICE** (vv.20,24,25 – What has 'kingdom of God' now come to mean?)

Study 21b: THE PASTOR'S PASSION -- PEOPLE (20:28-38)

20:28 The pastor's supreme example -- Christ (Isa. 53:12; 1 Peter 5:4)

20:29,30 Note the characteristics of the wolf (1 John 2:18,19)

(4) That this development did in fact take place at Ephesus is evident from the Pastoral Epistles (cf. 1 Tim.1:19f; 4:1ff; 2 Tim.1:15; 2:17f; 3:1ff.) and from the letter to the Ephesian church in Rev. 2:1ff. The Pastoral Epistles tell of a general revolt against Paul's teaching throughout the province of Asia ... **F.F. Bruce** *op. cit.*, p. 417

20:32 What is Paul's view of the means of Christian sanctification? (John 17:14-19)

(5) It is significant that these blessings come through commitment to the Word: Paul and Luke know nothing of the idea that church leaders stand over the Word committed to them (2 Tim. 1:14) and are in control of it; on the contrary, they stand under it. **I. Howard Marshall** p.335

20:31,33-35 Above all, the pastor will EXEMPLIFY GIVING -- not just demand it of his sheep! (John 13)

20:36-38 The proof of a pastor's success -- numbers are nice, but a wet neck is better!