

Anatomy of Revival Part 8

24 “For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Diana, brought no small profit (huge profits) to the craftsmen.”

Demetrius is the head of the crafts union in Ephesus. This huge organization was made up of silver miners, craftsmen, distributors, wholesalers, and retailers who handled the statues.

25 “He called them together with the workers of similar occupation, and said: “Men, you know that we have our prosperity by this trade.”

A massive union meeting was called, and Demetrius told them their jobs, income, homes, and families were in jeopardy because of Paul’s gospel. When a business of this size is in trouble, many smaller businesses, whose existence depends on it, are also jeopardized. When it is announced that sales are way off and layoffs and firings are going to occur, a riot will break out and Paul will be blamed.

26 “Moreover you see and hear that not only at Ephesus, but throughout almost all Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away many people, saying that they are not gods which are made with hands.”

Paul is well-known throughout all of Asia. To many, he has brought the message of salvation. To others, he is one who has broken the back of a thriving business which employs tens of thousands of people. To them Paul is responsible for an economic downturn in the city. Paul’s teaching has turned away many people from idolatry and worship of Diana to Jesus Christ. Instead of seeing this as a blessing to many people who have been in religious bondage, they take it personally because their income is threatened. Paul has faced this before with the owners of the girl possessed by a spirit of divination (Acts 16:16).

27 “So not only is this trade of ours in danger of falling into disrepute, but also the temple of the great goddess Diana may be despised, and her magnificence destroyed, whom all Asia and the world (Roman world) worship.”

The people thought “we are just the little guys to this Paul. He is out to destroy our whole religion. He is not only after Ephesus but the whole world.”

There were three parts to the worship of Diana:

1. *The Priesthood* – These men were eunuchs. They were castrated to keep them from participating in the worship. They could keep their minds on the stories and tell of the exploits of Jupiter, Bacchus, etc...
2. *The Virgins* – These girls handled the rituals of the temple. The forms of worship outside of sex were conducted by the virgins.
3. *The Dancers* – These women danced to arouse the men and at the end of their dance gave themselves to the nearest man for sex.

28 “Now when they heard this, they were full of wrath and cried out (shouted), saying, “Great is Diana of the Ephesians!”

Every riot has to have a slogan or a mantra. This anger and emotion will spread from these few men into the crowds in the street. Demetrius knew exactly what he was doing. He would get the people senseless with rage, possibly kill Paul, or drive him out.

29 “So the whole city was filled with confusion, and rushed into the theater with one accord, having seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians, Paul’s travel companions.”

Apparently, Demetrius took the crowd to the house of Aquilla and Priscilla where Paul was staying. Aquilla and Priscilla were protecting Paul and would not let the crowd have him (Romans 16:3).

The crowd grabbed two of Paul’s team to flush him out and it almost worked. Paul makes mention of fighting “beasts at Ephesus” (1 Corinthians 15:32) and this had to be what he was referring to.

Gaius is mentioned in Romans 16:23 and 1 Corinthians 1:14. Aristarchus is mentioned in Acts 20:4, 27:2, Colossians 4:10 and Philemon 24. When they took the two men into the amphitheater, the mob reached a fever pitch. A mob always has an organizer behind it which uses the mob as a weapon. The people are always the pawns. They react quickly and then forget why they are rioting (vs. 32).

30 “And when Paul wanted to go into the people, the disciples would not allow him.”

Paul wanted to speak to the crowd but the disciples, who saw the frenzy, knew Paul would be killed before he could speak.

31 “Then some of the officials of Asia, who were his friends, sent to him pleading that he would not venture into the theater.”

Paul found friends in high places. These are born again, spirit-filled aristocrats, powerful in the government of Ephesus. They were saved under Paul’s ministry and protected him from the mob. They also knew this was not a matter for Paul, but for the authorities.

32 “Some therefore cried one thing and some another, for the assembly was confused, and most of them did not know why they had come together.”

Back at the theater, the mob gained many followers, and everyone was confused as to what was going on. They were all shouting different things because they were being controlled and ruled by their emotions. Most of them did not even know why they were there. Many were probably paid to be there, hired by Demetrius. They shouted along with the rest of the mob but did not even know Paul.

33 “And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander motioned with his hand and wanted to make his defense to the people.”

Religion is always afraid of mobs but will use them if necessary. Alexander is an excellent lawyer. The Jews hoped he could still the mob. He failed when the crowd recognized he was a Jew. He used to be a coppersmith and a brilliantly evil man. Paul warned Timothy about him (2 Timothy 4:14). Alexander tried to quiet the people with his hand, but the people cried louder and longer.