

A MINISTRY FOR HUNGRY SAINTS

UNDER THE EXALTED CHRIST, THE GOSPEL BEGINS TO SPREAD

THE ACTS

† THE BOOK OF ACTS

OF THE APOSTLES

WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRIES, Associated

An overview of the Book of Acts, by Given O. Blakely

ACTS 5:31-32

"Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him."

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

Lesson #82

COMMENTARY ON: 19:30-41

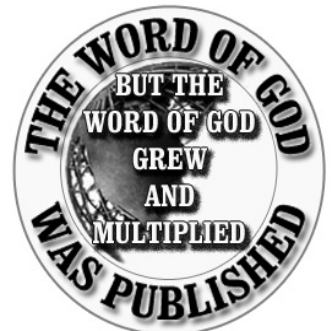
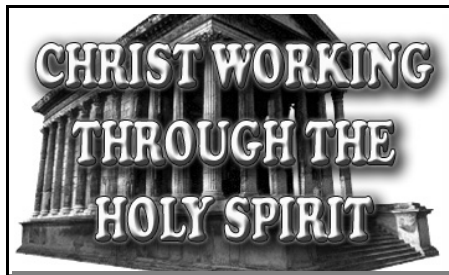
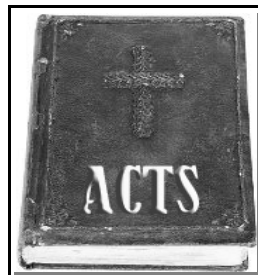
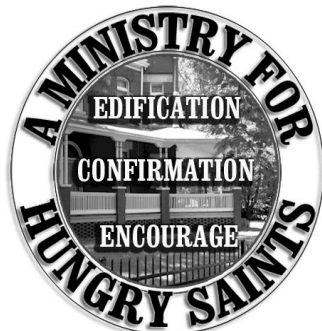
A TUMULTUOUS ASSEMBLY

Convinced they have a legitimate legal case against Paul and his collaborators, the craftsmen have entered the theater to present their case. When Paul knew of this, he sought to enter the theater to present his defense. However, there was such tumult that the brethren did not allow him to enter. Some friends from Asia also advised him not to enter into the fray. Through this means, Paul was spared unnecessary hardship. God Himself resolved the whole matter, turning the heart of the civil authority, and enabling him to see the unreasonableness of the whole assembly. The mob itself was guilty of breaking the law, and therefore he would not allow the proceedings to continue. He simply dismissed the assembly. Thus, we have a classic example of the protection of the servant of God through the means of government, which was ordained by God for the punishment of evil doers. Such intervention is always done according to Divine discretion. Those who live by faith will see this and give thanks.

ACTS 17:26-27

"And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us."

" . . . and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

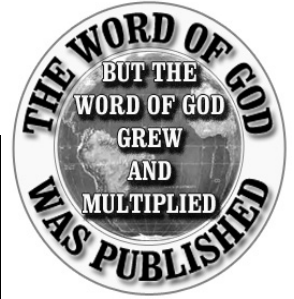


Since May, 1993, a ministry instituted for the encouragement of believers in Christ



The Book of Acts

Lesson Number 82



TRANSLATION LEGEND: ALT=Analytical-Literal Translation (2005), AMPLIFIED=Amplified Bible (1965), ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), ERV=English Revised Version (1885), ESV=English Stand Version (2001), GNB=Good News (1966), GWN=God's Word (1995), IE=International English (1973), ISV=International Standard Version (1967), JPS=Jewish Publication Society (1917), KJV=King James Version (1611), LITV=Literary Translation of the Bible (1976), LIVING=Living Bible (1971), MESSAGE=The Message (1993), MKJV=Modern KJV (1962), MONTGOMERY=Montgomery's New Testament (2001), MRD=Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), NAB=New American Bible (2002), NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV=New King James Version (1979), NLT=New Living Translation (1996), NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS=J B Phillips New Testament (1962), PNT=Bishop's New Testament (1595), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakh (1985), Webster=The Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS=William's New Testament (1937), TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE=Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT=Young's Literal Translation (1862).

A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

THE INSPIRED RECORD OF HOW THE ENTHRONED CHRIST, BY MEANS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, WORKED THROUGH HIS HOLY APOSTLES AND GODLY MEN, TO SPREAD THE WORD OF THE GOSPEL THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE WORLD, AND TO BRING EDIFICATION AND STABILITY TO MEMBERS OF CHRIST'S BODY.

----- **Lexicon and Bible Translation Codes with Identification** -----
LEXICON LEGEND: FRIEBERG = Friberg Lexicon, UBS = UBS Lexicon, LOUW-NIDA = Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT = Liddell Scott Lexicon, THAYER = Thayer's Greek Lexicon, LEH = LEH Lexicon, GINGRICH = Gingrich Lexicon

DISCLAIMER: The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

A TUMULTUOUS ASSEMBLY

19:30 And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not. ³¹ And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring him that he would not adventure himself into the theatre. ³² Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together. ³³ And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defence unto the people. ³⁴ But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians. ³⁵ And when the townclerk had appeased the people, he said, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter? ³⁶ Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly. ³⁷ For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess. ³⁸ Wherefore if Demetrius, and the craftsmen which are with him, have a matter against any man, the law is open, and there are deputies: let them implead one another. ³⁹ But if ye inquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly. ⁴⁰ For we are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse. ⁴¹ And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly." (Acts 19:30-41)

INTRODUCTION

Convinced they have a legitimate legal case against Paul and his co-laborers, the craftsmen of Ephesus have entered the theater to present their case. When Paul knew of this, he sought to enter the theater to present his own defense. However, there was such tumult that the brethren did not allow him to enter. Some friends from Asia also advised him not to enter into the fray. Through this means, Paul was spared unnecessary hardship. God Himself resolved the whole

Having been stirred up by Demetrius the silversmith, the unbelievers of Ephesus erupt in chaos and disorder – by Given O. Blakely

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matter, turning the heart of the civil authority, and enabling him to see the unreasonableness of the whole assembly. The mob itself was guilty of breaking the law, and therefore he would not allow the proceedings to continue. He simply dismissed the assembly. Thus, we have a classic example of the protection of the servant of God through the means of government, which was ordained by God for the punishment of evil doers. Such intervention is always done according to Divine discretion. Those who live by faith will see this and give thanks.

THE NATURE OF THE WORK OF THE LORD

It is essential that men consider the nature of the work of the Lord, lest they be discouraged by the circumstances they face while engaged in it. **There is a form of spiritual naivete that will cause the person who seeks to serve God to become faint, being unduly weakened by oppression.** This comes because of a misapprehension of some of the terms ascribed to those who are aligned with Christ. These include the following:

⇒ *“Conquerors”* (Rom 8:37).

⇒ *“Triumph”* (2 Cor 2:14).

⇒ *“Victory”* (1 Cor 15:57; 1 John 5:4).

This juvenile attitude is also related to a lack of understanding concerning certain key and comforting expressions.

⇒ *“A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee”* (Psa 91:7).

⇒ *“No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD”* (Isa 54:17).

⇒ *“Resist the devil, and he will flee from you”* (James 4:7).

Such texts involve human effort, yet are not limited to that effort. There is such a thing as God CAUSING us to triumph (2 Cor 2:14), MAKING us stand (Rom 14:4), and GIVING us the victory (1 Cor 15:57). It is not proper to think of such texts as guaranteeing the absence of opposition, or suggesting that foes will never be faced.

There are Scriptural words that encapsulate the idea of extensive warfare, battle, an extensive skirmish, far reaching militant involvement. Believers have certainly not been called to a tea party.

⇒ *“Overcoming”* (1 John 5:4).

⇒ *“Resist”* (James 4:7; 1 Pet 5:9).

⇒ *“Stand”* (Eph 6:11,13,14).

⇒ *“Stand fast”* (1 Cor 16:13; Gal 5:1; Phil 1:27; 4:1; 1 Thess 3:8; 2 Thess. 2:15).

⇒ *“Fight”* (1 Tim 6:12).

⇒ *“Wrestle”* (Eph 6:12).

All of these postulate a warfare in which the battle sometimes see-saws back and forth, as when Israel fought Amalek (Ex 17:11-13). Such battles have a way of eliminating the timid and the weak – especially those who never thought such battles were possible.

Paul expressed the nature of spiritual warfare from the experiential point of view. In this reflection the necessity of faith and the spiritual stamina that is brings is emphasized. *“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed”* (2 Cor 4:6-9). Several key considerations are found in this insightful testimony.

⇒ **THE NATURE OF THE TREASURE.** That the treasure to be protected and maintained is the *“light of the knowledge of the glory of God.”* That refers to the insight and understanding of God Himself that is part and parcel of His great salvation. Satan seeks to take this from us, for our salvation depends upon it.

⇒ **CONSTANT DEPENDENCE.** That God has so structured salvation as to make us continually dependent upon Himself. At no point does salvation proceed in its development independent of the personal knowledge of God.

Paul expressed the nature of spiritual warfare from the experiential point of view. In this reflection the necessity of faith and the spiritual stamina that is brings is emphasized.

- ⇒ **WORKED OUT IN EXPERIENCE.** That salvation is worked out in the crucible of human experience and participation in the good will of the Lord. The believer faces opposition that is superior to his own strength. This sets up a scenario that absolutely requires faith – conscious and deliberate reliance upon the Lord.
- ⇒ **THE APPOINTED MEANS.** That the skirmishes that are regularly faced by the believer are the means God uses to advance them in the faith, thereby bringing glory to Himself.
- ⇒ **SOMETIMES IT APPEARS AS THOUGH WE ARE LOSING.** That, by Divine design, there are times that suggest the child of God is actually losing the battle – times in which he is troubled on every side, persecuted, and thrown down to the ground.

Ephesus to this point. It was sufficient to thrust a novice from the work.

- ⇒ The people at Ephesus first asked him to stay with them, but he was unable to do so because the Lord was leading him elsewhere (18:19).
- ⇒ When returning to Ephesus, he confronted certain disciples who had not even heard if there was a Holy Spirit (19:1-5).
- ⇒ When he spoke in the synagogue, certain were hardened, believed not, and spoke evil of the way. This forced Paul to remove the disciples, and continue teaching daily in the school of Tyrannus. This was followed by a two year period during which all Asia heard the word of the Lord (19:9).
- ⇒ Certain vagabond Jews came, experimenting with the name of Jesus, whom Paul preached. Paul's

did in Pamphylia (Acts 15:38). **Apparent success can be a cause for failing owing to pride, as well as opposition can cause failure because of fear or discouragement.** But Paul did not abandon the work. This is because he had a spiritual understanding of the nature of the work, and was not deceived by appearance.

It is good to discern such things, and to walk in a keen awareness of them, lest we be discouraged by the way. Like the whorish woman of proverbs, the devil works among *“the simple ones,”* who are *“void of understanding”* (Prov 7:7-21), to turn them from the way.

THE IMPACT OF A WEAK CHURCH

There are few disadvantages that are greater than the ignorance that is imposed upon the people by failing to preach the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27). **Who is able to calculate the number of falls that are directly traceable to flawed and incomplete preaching?** When the truth, of which the church is the custodian (1 Tim 3:15), is compromised, diluted, or no longer proclaimed, iniquity even pours into the world like a flood. This is why Babylon the Great, the false and fornicating church, is referred to as *“the mother of harlots AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH”* (Rev 17:5). Not only is this spiritual monstrosity guilty of birthing erroneous and unfaithful churches, the decay of society in general is traced to her doorstep. **When the church becomes weak, it directly impacts upon the fabric of society.** In reality, society reflects the status of the church. This is because the body of Christ is, by Divine design, influential among men – either for good or evil. **If the church loses its moral and spiritual compass, the means of maintaining social civility and rectitude is removed, thereby mandating moral decline.** This is involved in being the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

When these realities are not expounded to the saints, they are at once at a decided disadvantage in the good fight of faith. If they do battle imagining there will never be setbacks, or times when they appear helpless, Satan will gain the advantage against them.

When these realities are not expounded to the saints, they are at once at a decided disadvantage in the good fight of faith. If they do battle imagining there will never be setbacks, or times when they appear helpless, Satan will gain the advantage against them. This is precisely why many professed believers come short of finishing the race, falling away in the time of temptation, or trial.

Think of what Paul had faced in

continued preaching shook the powers of darkness to their very foundation (19:13-20).

- ⇒ Now the entire city is set ablaze with confusion, and an initiative is launched against Paul and those who were laboring with him (19:23-29).

All of those potentially disconcerting events contained doors through which the timorous could exit, leaving the work of God like John Mark

THE DISCIPLES DO NOT PERMIT PAUL TO ENTER

“^{19:30} And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the

disciples suffered him not.” Other versions read, “would not allow him,”^{NKJV}

“would not let him,”^{NASB} “restrained him,”^{MRD} “refused to let him,”^{NJB}

“permitted him not,”^{RWB} and *“were not suffering him.”*^{XLIT}

“The disciples” were the ones who had embraced the Gospel Paul preached, and were following him, taking advantage of his faithful and insightful teaching. Disciples are learners, students, and those who have willingly subjected themselves to the one who is teaching. When it comes to the New Covenant, valid *“disciples”* are those who are following Jesus, and being taught by Him (Eph 4:20-21). They are the ones who have taken up their cross daily, and are following the Lamb wherever He goes (Lk9:23; Rev 14:4). **Where such people cannot be found, real disciples are not found.** There is no such thing as a Christian who does not follow Jesus and learn from Him. Although non-followers of Jesus often wear His name, insisting on being called *“Christian,”* they are really imposters – tares planted by the devil among the wheat, or genuine followers of Jesus. Such are fruitless, and God has made no provision for fruitless members of the body of Christ. He personally removes those who do not bear fruit (John 15:1-2).

HERE WE LEARN SOMETHING ABOUT PAUL

Paul was a *“chosen vessel,”* handpicked by Jesus for a special work (Acts 9:15; Gal 1:15). He was a Kingdom leader by virtue of the extraordinary revelations that had been given to him (2 Cor 12:1; Eph 3:3-7; Col 1:25-27). Yet, he did not lord it over the flock of God, choosing rather to feed and nourish it as a *“wise master builder,”* *“expert builder,”*^{NIV} or *“skilled master builder”*^{NRSV} (1 Cor 3:10).

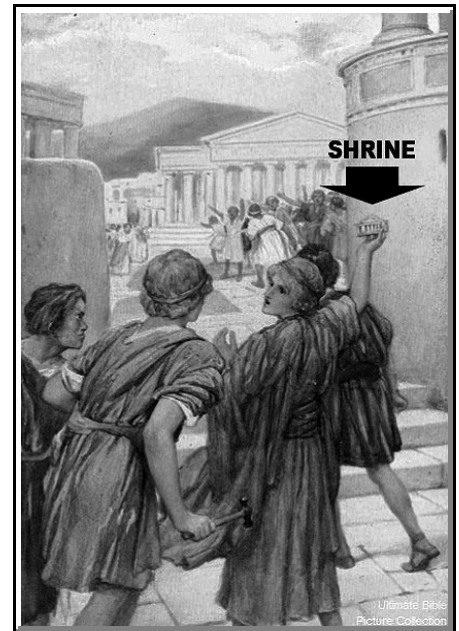
Paul did not think of himself as separate from the rest of the members of the body. As an apostle, he was placed **in** the body of

Christ, not over it (1 Cor 12:18,28). He could be comforted by the mutual faith of the brethren (Rom 1:12). He viewed fellow laborers as helpers, not vassals (Rom 16:9). There were times when the Lord used the other members of the body to rescue and protect Paul (Acts 9:25,30; 17:10,14; 2 Cor 11:33). Other times, they were used to encourage him (Acts 28:15). Still other times, he was sustained by them (Rom 16:2; Phil 2:25; 4:16). There were even brethren who regularly *“ministered unto him”* – which was infinitely more than a relationship like a slave to a master (Acts 19:22).

In this text Paul submitted to the counsel of other members of the body. It is not that he was ignorant in this area, and needed to be directed more wisely. **Rather, this is the manner in which the body of Christ functions.** There is a holy interdependence among those who are in Christ Jesus, and it is by Divine design. No member of the body of Christ is advantaged by distancing himself from the other members of the body. By its very nature, spiritual life is designed to be nurtured and sustained from outside itself, in addition to the well that springs up within (John 4:14). Our completeness in Christ postulates the contributions of His body, through whom He works.

WE ALSO LEARN SOMETHING ABOUT DISCIPLES

Notice the concern the disciples had for Paul – one of the premier laborers in the Kingdom of God. He was a *“wise master builder”* (1 Cor 3:10), and these disciples knew it. They did not stop the Ephesian mob from dragging Paul’s companions into the theater, but they kept them from apprehending Paul. This does not suggest they had no concern for their other brethren. They doubtless knew that the mob was actually more interested in taking hold of Paul. As for the disciples



themselves, and those who were laboring with Paul, they had the same trait as Aquila and Priscilla, who, for Paul’s own life, *“laid down their own necks”* (Rom 16:3-4). This is in perfect keeping with the teaching of John the beloved who wrote, *“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren”* (1 John 3:16).

Therefore, in the interest of the work of the Lord, and nature of Paul’s ministry, together with their consistent love and respect for Paul himself, they would not permit him to enter the arena. Reason was not on the throne in that Ephesian theater, but tumult was reigning supreme. They knew no good could come from Paul’s presence there. Therefore, they stepped into the room of decision, and protected Paul, even as did others before them. What a marvelous picture of the body of Christ being *“fitly framed together”* (Eph 2:21).

HIS FRIENDS DESIRE THAT HE NOT ENTER THE THEATER

“³¹ And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring him that he would not adventure himself into the theatre.”

CERTAIN OF THE CHIEF OF ASIA
“And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends . . .” Other versions read, *“officials of Asia,”*^{NKJV} *“some of the Asiarchs,”*^{NASB} *“officials of*

the province,”^{NIV} *“officials of the province of Asia,”*^{NRSV} *“rulers of Asia,”*^{DOUAY} *“provincial authorities,”*^{NET} *“the Asiarchs (political or religious officials in Asia),”*^{AMPLIFIED} *“Roman officers of the province,”*

Having been stirred up by Demetrius the silversmith, the unbelievers of Ephesus erupt in chaos and disorder – by Given O. Blakely

LIVING “leaders of the country,”^{1E} and “public officials.”^{WEYMOUTH}

COMMENTS BY ROBERTSON

Act 19:31 - Certain also of the chief officers of Asia (*tines de kai tôn Asiarchôn*). These “Asiarchs” were ten officers elected by cities in the province who celebrated at their own cost public games and festivals (Page). Each province had such a group of men chosen, as we now know from inscriptions, to supervise the funds connected with the worship of the emperor, to preside at games and festivals even when the temple services were to gods like Artemis. Only rich men could act, but the position was eagerly sought. ROBERTSON’S WORD PICTURES

These men, referred to as being “of the chief of Asia,” were political people. They were operating under the authority of Rome, which then ruled the world. It was the last of the four great world empires that were the subject of a dream God gave Nebuchadnezzar. These empires were Babylon (Dan 2:38), the Medio-Persians (Dan 5:28), Greece (Dan 8:21; 10:20; 11:2), and Rome (which overthrew Greece (Dan 2:40; 7:7,19,23). It was during the days of these kingdoms that God would set up His own kingdom upon the earth – that time being during the reign of Rome (Dan 2:44). Jesus was the Administrator of that Kingdom (John 18:36), which was of another order, and would eventually throw down all other kingdoms (Dan 2:44-45; Rev 11:15). This is another perspective of Jesus bruising the head of the serpent, destroying him, together with all of his works (Gen 3:15; Heb 2:14; 1 John 3:8; Rev 20:10).

Even during the time when these kingdoms were dominant, and prior to them as well, God raised up global leaders that were sympathetic toward the people of God.

- ⇒ Pharaoh, head of Egypt, who ruled the world, was inclined toward Joseph (Gen 41:41-44).
- ⇒ During the time Israel was in Egypt, Moses was targeted for the riches of Egypt, being called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter (Heb 11:24-28).
- ⇒ Nebuchadnezzar made Daniel the ruler over all the province of

Babylon (Dan 2:48).

- ⇒ Belshazzar made Daniel the “third [highest] ruler of the kingdom” of Babylon (Dan 5:29).
- ⇒ Daniel “prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian” (Dan 6:28).
- ⇒ Cyrus was commissioned by God to assist the Jews in the rebuilding of the Temple (Ezra1:1-8; 6:14; 7:11-28).
- ⇒ Artaxerxes assisted Nehemiah by giving him what was required to go to Jerusalem and rebuild the walls (Neh 2:1-8; 5:14; 13:6).
- ⇒ Gallio, Roman deputy of Achaia, refused to allow charges to be brought against Paul by the Jews (Acts 18:14-16).
- ⇒ The townclerk of Ephesus dismissed an assembly aligned against Paul and his co-laborers, declaring the assembly to be unlawful (Acts 19:35-41).
- ⇒ Paul once appealed to Caesar, convinced there would be more justice in the civil court than among the hard-hearted Jews (Acts 25:11; 28:19).

Now, we find that some of the political officials were personal friends to Paul. Like a true friend, he had showed himself friendly among them (Prov 18:24). His life was doubtless an excellent testimony of the peace that characterizes one who lives unto the Lord, as compared to living with a focused interest on self.

Throughout history, God has used governments and their rulers in the execution of His purposes. Although, from one view, these governments were competing powers, from yet another more complete view, they were pawns in the hands of the Lord. **When He desired, He turned their hearts like the rivers of water** (Prov 21:1). As the King of kings (1 Tim 6:15) and Lord of lords (Rev 19:16), he raised up kings, took them down, and put others in their place (1 Sam 2:8; Psa 75:6-7; Dan 2:21; 4:17).

Therefore, it should not surprise

us when civil authorities something rose in defense of the servants of the Lord, sometimes even promoting the knowledge of God among the empires over which they presided, and often assisting the children of Israel in what they had been commissioned to do (Dan 4:1-3; 34-37; 6:26-27; Ezra1:1-8; 6:14; 7:11-28; Neh 2:1-8; 5:14; 13:6).

Believers Were Not Reactionaries

This also confirms that early believers were not rabble-rousers, inciting civil disobedience or a lack of respect for political rulers of the people. While they by no means condoned everything done by government officials, as confirmed in John the Baptist rebuking Herod (Matt 14:4), yet they knew that they had been placed in their position by God Himself, who said, “You shall not revile God, nor curse a ruler of your people”^{NKJV} (Ex 22:28).

When it comes to societal influence, the “works” of believers are the appointed means of testimony (Matt 5:16). They are not to launch crusades against the civil authorities, like Barabbas did (Mk 15:7).

On one occasion, when the Jews had hauled Paul into court to raise charges against him, he pointed out to the governor that **he had not been found stirring up trouble**. “And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city” (Acts 24:12).

In our day, it has become fashionable for professing believers to speak openly against civil rulers. Such

CHRONOLOGY OF WORLD EMPIRES

- 1st world power = **EGYPT** (in power to 1491 BC) – Joseph and Moses prominent.
- 2nd world power = **ASSYRIA** (1491 - 606 BC) – Israel enters/conquers Canaan, Judges, David, Solomon, Prophets
- 3rd world power = **BABYLON** (606 - 538 BC) – Daniel prominent
- 4th world power = **MEDO-PERSIA** (538 - 333 BC) – Daniel prominent
- 5th world power = **GREECE** (333 - 44 BC) – Inter-testamental Period
- 6th world power = **ROME** (44 BC - 476 AD) – John the Baptist, Jesus, Apostles

activities need to be addressed with great sobriety and a keen understanding of what God has said on the matter, as well as the examples set by the Lord Jesus and the apostles.

DESIRING HIM NOT TO ENTER THE ARENA

“ . . . sent unto him, desiring him that he would not adventure himself into the theatre.” Other versions read, “sent to him pleading that he would not venture into the theater,”^{NKJV} “repeatedly

urged him not to,”^{NASB} “sent him a message begging him not to,”^{NIV} “requesting him seriously not to put himself in danger,”^{BBE} “and urged him not to throw himself into the theatre,”^{DARBY} and “warned him not to risk venturing into the theater.”^{AMPLIFIED}

This is a remarkable example of God working all things together for the good of His people (Rom 8:28). A God like this is to be trusted. On other occasions, Paul as able

to present a defense (Acts 21:37-30; 23:1-10; 24:24-26; 26:1-32). In this case, however, the circumstances were apparently more hostile, and it was not wise for Paul to give a defense of himself.

Being alert to Divine direction, God could order his path through the disciples, and through friendly civil authorities as well. Paul was able to be directed in this manner, a trait that does not characterize all who profess to be followers of Christ.

A CONFUSED ASSEMBLY

“³² **Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together.**”

Demetrius had presented what appeared to be a very logical case. Calling the craftsmen related to the making of artifacts honoring the goddess Diana, he had laid before the people the following argument.

- ⇒ The craftsmen made their living making shrines for the goddess Diana.
- ⇒ Paul had successfully convinced

outdated and no longer needed.

Yet, although the argument seemed logical enough, **the cause was not valid**, and therefore it did not yield the desired results.

SOME CRIED ONE THINGS, AND SOME ANOTHER

“Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused . . .” Other versions read, “the assembly was in confusion,”^{NASB} “there was no order in the meeting,”^{BBE} “the assembly was in complete confusion,”^{CJB} “the assembly was tumultuous,”^{DARBY} “the assembly was out of order,”^{GENEVA} “the assembly was in chaos,”^{NAB} “the

maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself; **That frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish**” (Isa 44:25). And again the Psalmist affirmed, “*The LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: He maketh the devices of the people of none effect*” (Psa 33:10).

What took place in that Ephesian theater is what David asked to take place among his enemies. “*Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul: let them be turned back and brought to confusion that devise my hurt*” (Psa 35:4). Again he wrote, “*Let them be ashamed and brought to confusion together that rejoice at mine hurt: let them be clothed with shame and dishonor that magnify themselves against me*” (Psa 35:26). Isaiah the prophet wrote, “*They shall be ashamed, and also confounded, all of them: they shall go to confusion together that are makers of idols*” (Isa 45:16).

theater is what David asked to take place among his enemies. “Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul: let them be turned back and brought to confusion that devise my hurt.”

people that a god made by men was really no god at all.

- ⇒ This would lead to the despising of the goddess Diana.
- ⇒ This would lead to the obsolescence of the temple erected in her honor.
- ⇒ This would render their trade

assembly itself had no idea what was going on,”^{NJB} “the assembly was all out of quiet,”^{PNT} “the assembly was all uproar and confusion,”^{WEYMOUTH} “was in an uproar,”^{MONTGOMERY} and “the gathering was in a tumult.”^{AMPLIFIED}

What we have here is the fulfillment of the saying, “*Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the LORD that*

It seems to me that it is in order to ask the Lord to impose confusion and shame upon those who set themselves against the Lord and His Christ. If someone is going to be confused, let it be the ungodly.

THE MORE PART KNEW NOT WHY THEY WERE COME TOGETHER

“ . . . and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together.”

Here is a classic example of confusion – when the people do not know why they have come together, and all reason is abandoned. In Christ, crowds can be orderly, with everyone attentive to

what is being said. This is what occurred on the day of Pentecost. Although there was a diversity of people present who spoke differing mother tongues, yet there was a certain order in that gathering that

cannot be explained apart from the working of the Lord (Acts 2:8-12). The gathering of which we are reading was the antithesis of that gathering in Jerusalem, when focus and order were present.

ALEXANDER IS PUT FORWARD

“³³And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defence unto the people.”

Now, an attempt will be made to have some order among the people, and the intelligent presentation of a cause. However, God had imposed confusion upon them, and the effort will be in vain. **Ultimately, the unity of the wicked is futile.** As it is written, *“Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished: but the seed of the righteous shall be delivered”* (Prov 11:21).

THEY DREW ALEXANDER OUT OF THE MULTITUDE

“And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward.” Other versions read, *“And some of the crowd concluded it was Alexander, since the Jews had put him forward,”*^{NASB} *“The Jews pushed Alexander to the front, and some of the crowd shouted instructions to him,”*^{NIV} *“Some of the crowd gave instructions to Alexander, whom the Jews had pushed forward,”*^{NRSV} *“And they brought Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward,”*^{ASV} *“Some of the crowd explained the situation to Alexander, whom the Jews had pushed to the front,”*^{CJB} *“Some of the crowd prompted Alexander, whom the Jews had put forward,”*^{ESV} *“some people concluded that Alexander was the cause, so the Jews pushed him to the front,”*^{GWN} *“And the Jewish people who were there, brought forward one of their men, a Jew, named Alexander,”*^{MRD} and *“Some of the crowd called upon Alexander [to speak], since the Jews had pushed and urged him forward.”*^{AMPLIFIED}

The multiplicity of Bible versions once again present a confusing

picture.

- ⇨ That the Ephesian craftsmen thought Alexander was the cause of the uproar, and so brought him forward.^{NASB/GWN}
- ⇨ The Jews explained the situation to Alexander, who was apparently an able spokesman, then put him forward.^{NIV/NRSV/CJB}
- ⇨ Some of the craftsmen explained the situation to Alexander, whom the Jews had put forward.^{ESV/AMPLIFIED}
- ⇨ The Jews put forward Alexander to

a selfish one, with no interest in the execution of justice.

HE TRIED TO MAKE A DEFENSE TO THE PEOPLE

“And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defense unto the people.” Other versions read, *“wanted to make his defense,”*^{NKJV} *“Alexander was intending to make a defense,”*^{NASB} *“make a statement to the people in answer,”*^{BBE} *“would have given the people satisfaction,”*^{DOUAY} *“would have excused the matter to the people,”*^{GENEVA} *“wished to explain something to the gathering,”*^{NAB} *“with the intention of explaining things to the people,”*^{NJB} and

The defense was certainly not in the behalf of Paul, for the Jews would never have put Alexander forward for that purpose. The Jews in Ephesus had been guilty of speaking “evil of the way” which Paul was declaring, doing so “before the multitude”

explain the whole situation.^{MRD}

We do not know the identity of this man. Some have supposed this was *“Alexander the coppersmith,”* to whom Paul alluded in his second letter to Timothy (2 Tim 4:14). That is a matter, the resolution of which, is not worthy of any extensive pursuit. I do not know how a person could fully support a conclusion on the matter.

Judging from the verse that follows, it seems to me that the Jews put him forward to clarify that the Jews were not involved in this whole matter, and that they did not stand in support of Paul. If this is true, then the effort was strictly

“wishing to make a defense and [planning] to apologize to the people,”^{AMPLIFIED}

The defense was certainly not in the behalf of Paul, for the Jews would never have put Alexander forward for that purpose. The Jews in Ephesus had been guilty of speaking *“evil of the way”* which Paul was declaring, doing so *“before the multitude”* (19:9).

However, the Jews did not condone the worship of Diana of the Ephesians, and her worshipers were certainly aware of that. **Nevertheless, the Jews in Ephesus, like those in Athens (Acts 17:16-17) had not made a**

stand against idolatry. They were apparently quite willing to live amidst the exaltation of false gods without being contentious about it. Paul, on the other hand, was not willing to do so, either in Athens or in Ephesus. He insisted on publicly proclaiming that idols were not gods, and that it was wholly improper to worship them, or to in any way suggest they were deities. Thus, the Jews put forward Alexander, who was apparently a good speaker like Tertullus, who could present a false way in a good and convincing manner (Acts 24:1-8). The aim here was no doubt to take the pressure off of the Jews, and confirm they had nothing whatsoever to do with Paul.

that, as stated in Scripture, it has been overstated, or put too strongly, in the raw form of Divine utterance or inspiration. It is simply seen as not palatable to men – and, indeed, this is true of those who are “*carnally minded*” (Rom 8:6). **Of course, truth, by Divine design, is never tailored for such people, for they have no natural capacity to receive the truth in any form.** It is beyond the scope of their understanding. The only hope for such people is for the truth to be presented in its purest form, for the Holy Spirit then uses it for the purposes God has ordained. To mitigate the truth, therefore, is to put it beyond the reach men, all the while imaging that, by

or “*savor*.” They are made less effective in their attempt to blur the line between truth and the lie. **By attempting to make the truth less abrasive, they have robbed it of its power, for it is its abrasiveness that serves to draw out the real nature of the people exposed to it.**

Jesus said, there was no way to regain saltiness once it had been lost. “*You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste (its strength, its quality), how can its saltiness be restored? It is not good for anything any longer but to be thrown out and trodden underfoot by men*”^{AMPLIFIED} (Matt 5:13). That is a most arresting statement, and worthy of extended consideration. **Among other things, it accentuates the seriousness of being silent in a declining generation.** The prophets were noted for their denunciation of false ideas (Isa 3:11; 5:11; 10:1; 29:15; Ezek 13:3; Zeph 2:5). Jesus was the premier spokesman against religious falsity (Matt 11:21; 18:7; 23:13; Lk 6:24; 11:46). The apostles, under the direction of Jesus and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, did not allow religious corruption to go unrebuked (Acts 19:26; Phil 3:2; Col 2:8; 2 Tim 3:1-5; 4:3-4; 2 Pet 2:12-19; 3:17; Jude 1:11-13).

Compromise can take many forms. It is found in not carrying a Bible, lest it offend someone. Perhaps it is not using the vernacular of Scripture, or adjusting one’s outward appearance so as to remove any suspicion that one is a Christian. It may take the form of silence, being tolerant of crude speech and immoral manners. Some even stoop to adopting outward manners that cause the sinner to be at ease – like holding a can of strong drink, or consenting to accompany a carnal friend to a worldly affair. However, whatever form compromise takes is dishonoring to the truth itself. It reveals ignoble motives and spiritual ignorance.

God’s people must not ignore the presence of corruption around them, or attempt to live as though it did not exist. The Divine mandate is to separate from competing interests, making no effort to blend with or tolerate them (2 Cor 6:15-7:1). It seems to me that this is a requisite for maintaining moral and spiritual purity.

COMPROMISE

TRUTH CLASH THE LIE

COEXISTENCE MAINTAINED

TRUTH IS SUPPOSEDLY MORE PALATABLE AND IMAGINED TO BE MORE ATTRACTIVE

FEIGNED PEACE

THE SPIRIT OF COMPROMISE

The spirit of compromise maintains a dreadful presence in the current Christian community. Under the shroud of a feigned peace, the modern church has moved into the moral background. Even though it is the appointed and ordained “*pillar and ground of the truth*” (1 Tim 3:15), it has chosen to be muffled by an institutional emphasis, and thus has lost its saltiness.

Compromise is nothing less than a fleshly attempt to make the truth more palatable. This assumes

reducing its potency, it is being put within their reach. It is the betrayal of a most pitiful state when supposedly Christian men attempt to make the truth acceptable to worldly-minded people. By diluting the truth itself, or failing to proclaim it in its fulness, men imagine that they are either giving a greater advantage for truth to work, or are creating a peaceable environment in which living will be more tolerable for themselves and their hearers.

However, when compromise is initiated, or tolerance allowed, those who do such things are losing their saltiness,

A PEOPLE WHO WERE NOT RESPECTED

“³⁴ But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.”

Here is an effort at compromise that came crashing down to the ground. It did so because the Jews themselves were not respected. Or, more precisely, their religion was held in disdain, and thus their persons were despised. This is a factor that compromisers never take into consideration.

WHEN THEY KNEW HE WAS A JEW

“But when they knew that he was a Jew . . .” Other versions read, *“found out that he was a Jew,”*^{NKJV} *“recognized that he was a Jew,”*^{NASB} *“realized that he was a Jew,”*^{NIV} *“perceived that he was a Jew,”*^{ASV} *“knowing him to be a Jew,”*^{MRD} *“having known that he was a Jew,”*^{YLT} and *“as soon as they saw that he was a Jew.”*^{WILLIAMS}

There was, then, a distinctiveness in the Jews. Some of it may have been owing to their appearance. However, it seems that the greater distinction was the knowledge of their religion. Even though many of them had not embraced it with zeal, their exposure to, and acquaintance with, God had produced some effects in the other nations. This distinctiveness could not be destroyed – even by their failure to adhere to the Lord and believe on His Son. **They had been Divinely cultured, and that was the cause of much of the prejudice against them.** It is true that the Egyptians held the offspring of Jacob in contempt because they were shepherds. As it is written, *“for every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians”* (Gen 46:34). However, that was not the point here, for the outcry of the crowd was not one promoting silversmiths, but one that elevated their god above the One of the Hebrews.

Although there was mass confusion at this time, it did not jar the Ephesian craftsmen out of their prejudice toward the Jews. Suddenly, when recognizing that Alexander was a Jew, they had a moment of lucidity – enough to

choose who they would despise, and who they would exalt. Both of those are exercises of human intelligence, and both are deliberate.

I have observed over the years that people who appear to be nearly out of their mind, losing all sense of reason, can suddenly marshal all of their rational powers against those whom they perceive to be a threat. Of course, this kind of rationality is not from above, but is a form of wisdom that is appropriately termed *“earthly, sensual, devilish”* (James 3:15).

WITH ONE VOICE THEY CRIED OUT

“. . . all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.” Other versions read, *“a single outcry,”*^{NASB} *“shouted in unison,”*^{NIV} *“began bellowing in unison,”*^{CJB} *“a united cry went up from all of them,”*^{CSB} *“everyone started to shout in unison,”*^{GWN} *“there arose from them all one roar of shouting,”*^{WEYMOUTH}

The original intent was no doubt to make it impossible to hear the defense

people were instructed, *“all the people shall shout with a great shout: and the wall of the city shall fall down flat”* (Josh 6:5). That is precisely what happened (John 6:20). Once, during the days of David, when he went to his brothers when Goliath was taunting the army, it is written that he came as *“the host was going forth to the fight, and shouted for the battle”* (1 Sam 17:20). After David had slain Goliath, *“the men of Judah arose, and shouted, and pursued the Philistines”* (2 Sam 17:52). Another time, *“as the men of Judah shouted, it came to pass that God”* Himself entered into the battle (2 Chron 13:15). During the days of Ezra, when a spiritual renewal was taking place, *“All the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord”* (Ezra 3:11).

The saints of God are admonished, *“Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart”* (Psa 32:11; 35:11). Again they are exhorted, *“shout unto God with the voice of triumph”* (Psa 47:1). And again, *“let thy saints shout for joy”* (Psa 132:9). The

In nearly every aspect of social life, whether athletic, political, entertainment, or general camaraderie, the excitement of a shout is common. Yet, in the field of religion, men often lisp as though they had no power to project their voice.

that Alexander attempted to make. Their contempt for the Jews, together with the perceived association of the Christians with the Jews, compelled them to take the ears of the people away from this Jew. As they continued shouting, the fervor for Diana apparently increased more and more. That is the effect that shouting can have upon people.

THE RELEVANCY OF THE SHOUT

Of old time, there was such a thing as a *“shout for mastery”* (Ex 32:18). When the walls of Jericho fell down, the

Psalmist proclaimed that when the Lord clothed men with salvation, the *“saints shall shout aloud for joy”* (Psa 132:16). The inhabitants of Zion are told, *“Cry out and shout”* (Isa 12:6). At the report of the working of the Lord the people of God are commanded, *“shout, ye lower parts of the earth”* (Isa 44:23). Through Jeremiah the Lord said, *“shout among the chief of the nations: publish ye, praise ye”* (Jer 31:7). At the prospect of blessing Israel was told, *“Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel”* (Zeph 3:14). Zechariah admonished the people, *“shout, O daughter of Jerusalem”* (Zech 9:9). When

the Lord descends from heaven, He shall do so *“with a shout”* (1 Thess 4:16). Those who bring good tidings are commanded, *“lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid!”* (Isa 40:9). In prophecies concerning the day of salvation, Isaiah said, *“Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice”* (Isa 40:9). When Peter preached on the day of Pentecost, it is written that he *“lifted up his voice”* (Acts 2:14).

In nearly every aspect of social life, whether athletic, political,

entertainment, or general camaraderie, the excitement of a shout is common. **Yet, in the field of religion, men often lisp as though they had no power to project their voice.** Why should gatherings shout at an athletic event, but whisper in the congregation of the saints? What logic can be adduced for verbal articulation that cannot be easily heard and distinguished – particularly when the truth of God is spoken? Does not God admonish His people time and time again to speak with fervor. And why is this so? **Because there is something about**

the elevated voice that impacts upon human emotion. Even when God spoke from heaven, it was associated with thunder, not a gentle and silent flowing stream (Ex 20:18; Psa 18:13; John 12:29; Rev 4:5; 8:5; 11:19; 19:6). It seems to be that it is a comely trait to speak up in matters pertaining to life and godliness. The microphone-generation should not have an undue effect upon those who speak for Jesus. The voice, like the rest of our *“members,”* is to be sanctified, given to God, and used for His glory. This seems apparent enough to say no more about it.

THE TOWN CLERK SPEAKS

³⁵ **And when the townclerk had appeased the people, he said, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter?”**

On the surface, it appears as though a local political official brings some semblance of order in a shouting mob. Behind the scenes, however, it is the living God who is at work, working things together for the good of those who love Him.

THE TOWNCLERK

“And when the townclerk had appeased the people . . .” Other versions read, *“city clerk had quieted,”*^{NKJV} *“chief secretary had got the people quiet,”*^{BBE} *“city clerk had calmed the crowd down,”*^{CSB} *“chief of the city had tranquilized them,”*^{MRD} *“town clerk restrained the crowd,”*^{NAB} *city secretary quieted the crowd,”*^{NET} *“the mayor was able to quiet*

them,”^{NLT} *“town clerk had pacified the people,”*^{PNT} *“the main city official made the crowd be quiet,”*^{IE} *“city recorder quieted the mob,”*^{WILLIAMS} and *“at length the recorder got them quiet.”*^{MONTGOMERY}

As the above coin indicates, this was an important office in the Roman government. This person was responsible for recording and reading the laws of the state. It is also suggested in this text that this person probably recorded the proceedings that took place during official meetings held in the amphitheater. It is to be admitted that on paper, this meeting would not be impressive, and would probably cause indignation among the rulers, for the peace of the city had been disrupted. **By way of comparison, when those who were given to “curious arts” brought their books together and burned them publically, there was not a tumultuous environment.** No disruption was brought to the city by those who had believed on the name of Jesus Christ.

I wonder how many church meetings would continue if someone of authority insisted on maintaining order, and was recording everything that was being said. **Of course, those of tender heart know that there is a record written in heaven of what men are saying, and that the record will be brought up on the day of judgment** (Matt 12:36).

Even the devil’s crowd knows

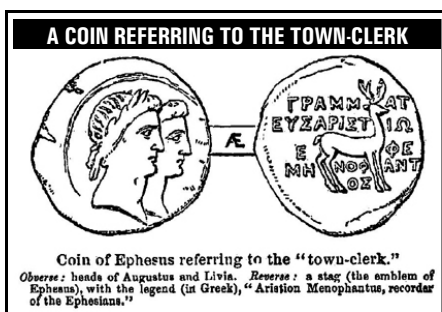
that confusion and pandemonium is an uncomely environment in which nothing of worth can be accomplished.

It is unfortunate that a sizeable segment of the Christian community has made an effort to dignify confusion by saying it is a special outpouring from God. Thus people falling down under the purported influence of the Spirit, and speaking in an unknown tongue, mingled with varied unintelligible utterances, is viewed as a blessing from God. **How likely is it that the God who demands that He be loved with all of the mind would send an extraordinary blessing on His people that excluded the mind?** To dignify such action, we need something more than the biased opinion of men, or those who wrest the Scriptures to suit their preconceived notions.

WHAT MAN IS THERE WHO DOES NOT KNOW

“ . . . he said, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana . . .”

First, the city official points out that there is no need to extol Diana in this public and tumultuous gathering – particularly by irrational shouts and tumult. There was no person in those parts that did not know the city of Ephesus worshiped *“the great goddess Diana.”* This was general knowledge, and there was no need to affirm it as though it was not known by everyone.



THE IMAGE WHICH FELL DOWN FROM JUPITER

“... and of the image which fell down from Jupiter?” Other versions read, “and of the image which fell down from Zeus,” ^{NKJV} “the image which fell down from heaven,” ^{NASB} “the statue that fell from heaven,” ^{NRSV} “the sacred stone that fell from the sky,” ^{RSV} “Diana, which was sent down from Jupiter,” ^{BBE} “Jupiter’s offspring,” ^{DOUAY} “her image which descended from heaven,” ^{MRD} “her image that fell from the sky,” ^{NAB} “her statue that fell from heaven,” ^{NJB} “whose image fell down to us from heaven,” ^{NLT} “the image which came down from Jupiter,” ^{PNT} “her holy rock,” ^{IE} “the sacred stone [image of her] that fell from the sky.” ^{AMPLIFIED} “the image which fell down from Jupiter himself,” ^{PHILLIPS} “Who doesn’t know that her image which fell from heaven is right here,” ^{CEV} and “her sacred stone image that fell straight out of heaven.” ^{MESSAGE}

The differing versions present several possibilities.

- ⇒ That an image fell down from Jupiter, or Zeus.
- ⇒ That the image fell down from heaven.
- ⇒ That the very statue in the temple fell from heaven.
- ⇒ That a rock, or stone of some sort fell down from heaven.
- ⇒ That Diana was sent down from Jupiter.
- ⇒ That Jupiter’s offspring fell down from heaven.
- ⇒ That Diana’s image descended from heaven.
- ⇒ That a holy rock belonging to Diana fell down from heaven.
- ⇒ That the sacred stone that fell from heaven was an image of Diana.
- ⇒ That Jupiter himself personally sent the stone from heaven.

I gather that the image that is said to have fallen down from heaven is

the image of Diana, the idol that resided in the temple dedicated to her, and of which small replicas were made by the silversmiths. **This fits perfectly with the text which does not have to do with religious artifacts, but with gods that have been made with hands.**

According to the flesh, this was an ingenious and calculating statement. Demetrius had affirmed that Paul taught that gods made with hands were no gods

I gather that the image that is said to have fallen down from heaven is the image of Diana, the idol that resided in the temple dedicated to her, and of which small replicas were made by the silversmiths. This fits perfectly with the text which does not have to do with religious artifacts, but with gods that have been made with hands.

at all. Now the town clerk affirms that this is not the kind of God that the Ephesians worshiped (even though, in fact, the idol was made by men). By referring to “the image” as falling down from Jupiter, he will be able to say that Demetrius had not leveled a legitimate charge at Paul. This the whole meeting, he concluded, was out of order.

THE ASSUMPTION OF HEAVENLY ACTIVITY

The assumption of heavenly activity remains common among religious men. This is even true of the Christian community. All sectarianism, or denominationalism, assumes that their interpretations have been given by God, or are in precise accord with what is written. From the Roman church to the Mormons and the Jehovah’s Witness, with everything in between, men are of the opinion that their religion was given by God. However, since God is “not the author of confusion” (1 Cor 14:33), this cannot be true.

I personally come from a background where claims were made of being the “true New Testament church.” Many of the congregations within this movement even put this representation on

the cornerstone of their buildings: “Founded in 30 A.D.” Although the exclusivity of that particular institution was not taught with equal vigor by all of its teachers, the clear implication of their teaching led to this conclusion. Some branches of the movement, which is significantly fractured, even ruled out other segments of it upon the basis of human interpretation. Their view of this interpretation was much like that of the Roman church, which assigns infallibility

to its head – a head who is chosen by the election of key men within its organization.

This whole circumstance does not differ substantially from that of our text. It unveils a human tendency that has been prominent following the expulsion of our parents from the Garden. **Men have this inveterate tendency of assigning inordinate worth to their own opinions, as well as a marked proclivity to be doubtful of the affirmations that have been made by God Himself in the Holy Scriptures.**

All of this is highlighted in our text. However, men of wisdom must be able to make the transition to our present time, confirming that **this is a sterling example of the reasoning of fallen men.** Even if this manner of thinking is done in the name of “Jesus whom Paul preacheth” (Acts 19:13), it is still foolish, and ought not to be found among those who claim identity with God through Jesus Christ the Lord.

Weak thinking cannot support critical postulates, or be the basis for religious conclusions. It must be excluded from anything associated with Christ.

A LEGITIMATE CHARGE CANNOT BE RAISED

“³⁶ Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly. ³⁷ For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess.”

THE SUPREMACY OF THE LORD

Keep in mind that we are being exposed to the working of the Lord Himself. Although it may appear as though He is working behind the scenes, His hand is actually eminent in the scene. If men cannot see it, it is only because they have not been given eyes to see. It is said of ancient Israel, who was also obtuse concerning the working of the Lord, *“Yet the LORD hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day”* (Deut 29:4). When speaking with the prophet Ezekiel, God spoke of a condition where the people had eyes, yet could not see. *“Son of man, thou dwellest in the midst of a rebellious house, which have eyes to see, and see not; they have ears to hear, and hear not: for they are a rebellious house”* (Ezek 12:2). **In such a case, even though the Lord was at work at a remarkably detailed level, yet it was not apparent to those whose hearts were hardened.** Their condition was imposed upon them because of their refusal to give heed to what was given to them. Therefore Isaiah said, *“He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them”* (John 12:40; Isa 29:10).

Men may banter about the free will of man, human volition, and the likes. But after they have expended all of their intellectual energy, they must contend with the fact that they have been created by the God whose purpose drives the events and destiny of this *“present evil world.”* The prophets teach us that when calamity breaks out, there is a sense in which it can be traced back to God Himself: *“shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done it?”* (Amos 3:6). If there are deceivers afoot among men, we are taught, *“the deceived and the*

deceiver are His” (Job 12:16). If there are heresies, or divisions, among those professing identity with God, we are taught that this is a necessity. *“For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you”* (1 Cor 11:19).

Professed Christians who argue about the Sovereignty of God are brothers to the Ephesian craftsmen. They speculate about things that have been revealed, thereby exposing the hardness of their own hearts. They are like those to whom Paul had to say, *“Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?”* (Rom 9:19-21).

As Paul indicates in the above text, all people have not been made for the singular purpose of being honorable. Some, like Pharaoh, are intended to be used for dishonorable purposes (Rom 9:17). They are like the *“bad”* fish who were caught in the kingdom net, only to be at last cast away (Matt 13:47-49).

Such lofty considerations are not attended with lengthy explanations concerning their cause. Rather, they are set before us that we might know that, ultimately, everything is really traced back to God. As it is written, *“For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen”* (Rom 11:36). Men may not understand it. They may even object to such things being said. However, they have been said, and men are to believe them, whether they can understand them or not.

THE NECESSITY OF THIS DISCUSSION

This kind of discussion is necessary in order to the maintenance of both a sound mind and sound doctrine. **If the matter of salvation is set within the context of the human will, men**

GENESIS 14:19; EPHESIANS 4:6; ROMANS 11:36

GOD IS ABOVE ALL

GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE
EPHESIANS 1:11; 3:11

DETERMINED IN CHRIST
EPHESIANS 3:11; 2 TIMOTHY 1:9

CHRIST EXALTED ABOVE ALL
EPHESIANS 1:20-21; PHILIPPIANS 2:9; 1 PETER 3:22

GOD CHOOSES A PEOPLE
EPHESIANS 1:4; 2 THESSALONIANS 2:13; 1 PETER 2:9

THE PEOPLE GIVEN TO CHRIST
JOHN 6:39; 17:9,11,24; HEBREWS 2:13

ALL THINGS ARE OF GOD
2 CORINTHIANS 5:18; 1 CORINTHIANS 8:6

will never be able to have the confidence that is required to run the race that has been set before them (Heb 12:1-2). There are several revealed pillars of thought that support sound and beneficial reasoning concerning the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. They begin with the basic postulate that God is *“above all.”* There is no one, nor is there any circumstance, to which God Himself is subject. That includes the Lord Jesus Himself, who has been exalted *“above all.”* It is said of that marvelous exaltation, *“For He [God the Father] hath put all things under His [Jesus the Son] feet. But when He [God the Father] saith all things are put under Him [Jesus the Son], it is manifest that He [God the Father] is excepted, which did put all things under Him [Jesus the Son]. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him [Jesus the Son], then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him [God the Father] that put all things under Him [Jesus the Son], that God may be all in all”* (1 Cor 15:27-28).

If God is not subject to the One who has been exalted above all else, including every name that has been named, you may be sure He is not subject to anyone or anything else.

The absolute and

unquestionable supremacy of God is affirmed in Scripture. *“And He blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth”* (Gen 14:19). Again, *“For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen”* (Rom 11:36). *“One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all”* (Eph 4:6). Sound reasoning is based upon the cognizance of Divine domination. If this

fruitful participation with Christ (Heb 3:14).

⇨ **CHRIST EXALTED ABOVE ALL.** Following His vicarious death (Isa 53:5), the removal of sin (John 1:29; Heb 1:3), and destruction of the devil (Heb 2:14) and his works (1 John 3:8), Jesus was exalted. There is no name, no power, and no domain over which Jesus does not presently preside. The solitary exception is God

What appears to be nothing more than opposition is actually a patch of desert through which the sons are passing en route to glory. Viewed in any other way, the text will become confusing, for it appears as though there is a window in the lives of Paul and his co-laborers when the enemy has the upper hand.

fact is denied, there is nothing of eternal value that can be apprehended.

⇨ **GOD’S ETERNAL PURPOSE.** The fact of God’s *“eternal purpose”* is stated in Ephesians 3:11. *“According to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* This is a purpose that determines what God does, for He works everything *“according to the purpose”* (Eph 1:11). Although this purpose includes the consideration of men, there is a sense in which it stands separate and apart from them. This is seen in the fact that it is purpose *“in Christ Jesus.”* Even when men are *“called”* by God, it is not according to their need, but *“according to His purpose”* (Rom 8:28).

⇨ **DETERMINED IN CHRIST.** So far as the execution of this purpose is concerned, it is *“in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Eph 3:11). The Son of God forms the perimeter of this purpose, so that no benefit can be realized from it, apart from fellowship with Christ, into which men are called (1 Cor 1:9). So far as beneficial involvement by God Himself, it all hinges on one’s productive and

Himself, who alone is not subject to Christ (1 Cor 15:27).

⇨ **GOD CHOOSES A PEOPLE.** There is a people in the earth who have been chosen by God. This is not a human speculation, but a Divine affirmation. These people are referred to as a *“chosen generation”* (1 Pet 2:9). They are said to have been *“chosen in Him (Christ) before the foundation of the world”* (Eph 1:4). Further, they were chosen *“to salvation”* by the means of *“sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth”* (2 Thess 2:13).

⇨ **THE PEOPLE ARE GIVEN TO CHRIST.** Those whom God has chosen belong to Him. Not only has He created them, He has made full provision for the liquidation of the debt created by their sin. He has also regenerated, or re-created them, so that they are his *“sons and daughters”* (2 Cor 6:18). In strict keeping with His purpose, God has given these chosen ones to Christ Jesus, to shepherd and care for them. Ultimately, He is bringing them to glory (Heb 2:10). Jesus confessed that God had given them to Him (John 6:39; John 17:7,9,11,21).

These realities are all fully operative in our text. In spite of the apparent circumstances, the God of heaven is working according to His purpose, and the Lord Jesus is bringing the children who have been given to Him to glory. **What appears to be nothing more than opposition is actually a patch of desert through which the sons are passing en route to glory.** Viewed in any other way, the text will become confusing, for it appears as though there is a window in the lives of Paul and his co-laborers when the enemy has the upper hand. However, this is emphatically **not** the case. This is all being done under the general canopy of Divine working. As it is written, *“For God is my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth”* (Psa 74:12). He is bringing the sons to glory, perfecting them, and working all things together for their ultimate good.

THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF OUR TEXT

In our text, God has brought confusion among the people just as surely as He did at Babel (Gen 11:7). He has also turned the heart of the leader of the people like a river of water, thereby changing the whole direction of this assembly (Prov 21:1). Suddenly, things have turned for the benefit of the ones targeted for persecution. In the words of Scripture, *“This is the LORD’S doing; it is marvelous in our eyes”* (Psa 118:23).

There is a very definite sense in which the will of the Lord is being worked out among men – even among those who are not consciously subject to Him. While this reality is disputed among religious men, those who are of faith can sense not only the reality of this, but its necessity as well. God will use a speech made by an unregenerate government official to diffuse a determined persecution.

THESE THINGS CANNOT BE SPOKEN AGAINST

“Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against . . .” From the perspective of the town clerk, the commitment of the Ephesian citizenry to Diana was so settled that it could not be unseated by the words or works of Paul. Of course, there had been sufficient inroads made in the idolatrous community, so that even the living of the silversmiths was now jeopardized.

However, this man dismisses that, together with the fact of the massive book-burning that had taken place in the city. He apparently feels that things will eventually revert to the Ephesus-norm.

YE OUGHT TO BE QUIET

“... ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly.” Other versions read, “keep calm and do nothing rash,”^{NASB} “it would be better for you to be quiet, and do nothing unwise,”^{BBE} “and not do anything foolish,”^{GWN} “ought to be tranquil, and to do nothing with precipitancy,”^{MRD} “and not do anything reckless,”^{NET} “You must stop and think before you do anything wrong.”^{IE} and “(keep yourselves in check) and do nothing rashly.”^{AMPLIFIED}

The word “rashly” is translated from a word meaning, “falling forward, headlong. . . precipitate, rash, reckless,”^{THAYER} “thoughtless,”^{FRIBERG} “pertaining to impetuous and reckless behavior - 'reckless, impetuous,”^{LOUW-NIDA} and “hastily.”^{LIDDELL-SCOTT} In the English language the word “rash” means “proceeding from lack of deliberation or caution: acting, done, or expressed with undue haste or disregard for consequences: imprudently involving or incurring risk.” **In other words, it is conduct that is more characteristic of the brute creation than of man, who is made in the image of God.**

From the Scriptural perspective this kind of compulsive behavior is referred as being hasty, or making haste. When prophesying of the era of the Christ, Isaiah said, “he that believeth shall not make haste” (Isa 28:16). **In other words, believing stops a person from acting compulsively, rashly, or without due thought.** The tendency to react impulsively, erupting in thoughtless words and deeds and in a state of hotheadedness, is an area in which Satan is especially active. There have been persecutions launched against the saints of God that were driven by this kind of reaction. In fact, that was the intent of the gathering described in our text. Were it not for the government of God, His children would not be able to survive such behavior. However, the Lord is at the helm of ship-humanity, and He is governing the world with His people in mind.

Therefore it is written, “Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: **the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain**” (Psa 76:10). It is written that

God “*stilleth . . . the tumult of the people*” (Psa 65:7). Just as God has established borders for the massive seas of the earth, beyond which they cannot pass (Job 26:10; 38:11; Psa 104:9; Jer 5:22), so **God has set the bounds for human wrath and opposition, and He will not allow the impulsiveness of man to go beyond those borders.** An example of the wrath of man praising God is the death of Christ. Men gathered together against Christ, thinking to rid themselves of His restraining influence. But God took their action and used it for His own purpose, making an end of sin (Heb 9:26), destroying the devil (Col 2:15; Heb 2:14), and opening a living way to heaven (Heb 10:20).

Our text is an example of the Divine restraint of human wrath. It depicts the hand of God reaching into earth and putting shackles on human intentions.

From the perspective of the town clerk, it was important that order be maintained and the civil authorities not be called into the matter. Even the heathen know that civility and order are proper. However, there is more to this matter than that. God has come to the aid of His servants Gaius and Aristarchus. He does not make them physically superior to their

THESE MEN ARE NOT ROBBERS OR BLASPHEMERS

“For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess.”

Now the official chides Demetrius and his cohorts for acting compulsively and without due regard for civil authority. As I have already said, there was a Divine intention being fulfilled here, even though the official was completely unaware of it.

They Are Not Robbers of Churches

Other versions read, “robbers of temples,”^{NKJV} “temple robbers,”^{NRSV} “sacrilegious,”^{RSV} “doing damage to the holy place,”^{BBE} “temple-plunderers,”^{DARBY} “neither committed sacrilege,”^{GENEVA} “have stolen nothing from the temple,”^{NLT} and “plunderers of the temple.”^{PHILLIPS}

Here, the word “churches” is not translated from the Greek word ἐκκλησία (ek-klay-see-ai) as in Acts 9:31; 15:41; and 16:5. In those texts, the reference was clusters of believers who gathered together. Here, however, the reference is to a structure. The Greek word used is ἱεροσούλους (hee-er-os’-oo-los), a compounded word that puts “robbers” and

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enemies like Samson. He does not move the brethren to secretly escort them out of the city, like the Thessalonian brethren. Here the Lord whistles, as it were, for the town clerk to step into the situation and deliver Paul’s companions from danger. The words of the official were spoken to calm the situation so as not to require further intervention. However, this occasion, as all others, is being driven by the Divine agenda, “For the kingdom is the LORD’S: and He is the Governor among the nations” (Psa 22:28).

“temple” together. The expression “robbers of churches,” or “robbers of temples,” is the translation of the single Greek word of reference. This is the only place it is used in the entirety of Scripture. The verb form of the Greek word (it is in the noun form here) is found in Romans 2:22, where it is translated “commit sacrilege,”^{KJV/NKJV/NASB,NIV,NRSV} “rob temples,”^{NKJV} and “robbing the sanctuary and doing sacrilege.”^{AMPLIFIED}

The idea here is that neither

Paul nor those aligned with him, had pilfered things from the temple dedicated to Diana. Paul had soundly denounced idolatry, but he had not entered into the Ephesian temple and removed some temple artifact to destroy it. This kind of action was taken by several Old Testament saints who were noted for destroying physical things associated with idolatry (2 Chron14:3; 23:17; 31:1; 32:12). **The distinction is that such action took place because idolatry had arisen among the Israelites themselves.**

Here, however, the believers did not enter into the temple of Diana to rob or destroy anything there. That was not the manner of those who believed in Christ. They overthrew idolatry by teaching, not by overt activity.

They Are Not Blasphemers

Other versions read, "blasphemers of our goddess," ^{NASB} "talking against our goddess," ^{BBE} "speak injuriously of your goddess," ^{DARBY} "insult our goddess," ^{GWN} "reviled our goddess," ^{MRD} "spoken against our goddess," ^{NLT} "despisers of your goddess," ^{PNT} "speaking evil of your goddess," ^{YLT} "defamed her," ^{LIVING} "said anything bad about her," ^{IE} "abusive speech against our goddess," ^{WILLIAMS} and "blasphemous speech about our goddess." ^{AMPLIFIED}

in the book of Acts, which speaks of the focus of good preaching.

FOCUSED PREACHING

- ⇨ Jesus Christ is said to have been "preached" (3:20).
- ⇨ They "preached through Jesus the resurrection of the dead" (4:2).
- ⇨ The disciples "ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ" (5:42).
- ⇨ They "preached Christ" (8:5; 9:20).
- ⇨ It is written that "preached the word of the Lord" (15:36), and "preached the Gospel" (8:25; 16:10).
- ⇨ Jesus was "preached" (8:35). Preaching was done "in the name of Jesus" (9:27).
- ⇨ They "preached the word of God" (13:5; 14:25).
- ⇨ Through Jesus they "preached . . . the forgiveness of sins" (13:38).
- ⇨ It is written that they "preached the gospel" (14:7,21).
- ⇨ They preached Jesus, that He "is Christ" (17:3).

device" (Acts 17:29). However, he did not engage in inflammatory speech about the false gods themselves.

True preaching is to thinking people. It is by means of holding forth the superior that the inferior is made known. The heart of the preaching of Paul and the other apostles was the Person of Christ and His indispensable ministry. They did not hold classes in the weakness of false religion, but taught of the superiority of Divine wisdom as it is revealed in Christ Jesus.

When detailed instruction was given concerning corruption, it was generally to the church, and that because it had either crept into the church, or was about to do so.

The Danger of A Distorted Emphasis

There is a subtle danger in maintaining a distorted emphasis. I speak particularly of those who speak in the name of Jesus Christ. **One of the indications of a falling away is when the accent of preaching is changed.** There are those, for example, whose preaching centers in the developing of good marriages. Others accent the home, or family itself, majoring in nearly every message on that facet of life. Still, others choose to emphasize personal success, particularly in the form of health and wealth. Still others are on a crusade restore the nation to a state of godliness. Some choose to continually speak of abortion and the right to life. Others insist on underscoring political freedom and the right to pursue personal interests.

There are other seemingly good emphases, such as apologetics – seeking to prove there is a God and that the Bible is true. Others speak and write extensively about the flaws in heathen religion. Some are specialists in historic Christianity, and are zealous to restore the ancient example of the church of the living God. Some make it their aim to unite all professing believers.

It is not that any of these things are wrong of themselves. **Yet, all of them are wrong as an emphasis.** There is not a solitary example of such a focus in the Word of God. This is because such things are more man-centered than God-centered. They also depend on human

If the assessment of the town clerk is true, and there is no reason to suspect that it is not, we have a confirmation of the nature of Paul's preaching. He did not launch into a diatribe against the idols, but simply classed put them all together as being "no gods." Rather than his message being an expose of particular false god's, it was a proclamation of the true God and His Christ.

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- ⇨ They preached "Jesus and the resurrection" (17:18).

Paul **did** teach that men "ought to turn from these vanities unto the living God" (14:15). That, of course, was stated when the people of Lystra sought to offer sacrifices to Paul and Barnabas. In Athens Paul also affirmed, "we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's

analysis rather than Divine revelation and proclamation.

In my judgment, and I am dogmatic on this, it is never right to upstage the Lord Jesus by assuming another emphasis. The nobility of the cause has nothing whatsoever to do with sound thinking. If any other emphasis is valid, then men are not made complete in Christ. If the only way to correct

waywardness is to continually hammer upon it, then faith really does not alter the perspectives and persuasions of men.

I realize that the above position evinces a certain contempt for religious careers, and the building of specialized ministries. **However, if the thrust of preaching is not Christ, I do not know how it is possible to say God will undergird the cause – regardless**

of its seeming nobility. If God has hinged everything to Christ, and given Him to be the “*Head over everything for the church*” (Eph 1:22), what valid reason can be adduced for adopting any other emphasis. May God hasten the day when those who wear the name of Jesus are noted for their proclamation and exposition of Him, His accomplishments, and His ministry. When this happens, erroneous emphases will be apparent.

IT SHALL BE DETERMINED IN A LAWFUL ASSEMBLY

“³⁸ Wherefore if Demetrius, and the craftsmen which are with him, have a matter against any man, the law is open, and there are deputies: let them implead one another. ³⁹ But if ye inquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly. ⁴⁰ For we are in danger to be called in question for this day’s uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse.”

The town clerk does not rely upon mere political authority, but appeals to the reasoning of the Ephesian mob. His purpose is to avoid being called into question about the inciting of the riot. However, God Himself is in this whole matter, moving upon the people to act in favor of His own people.

THE NEED TO UNDERSTAND

In order to truly benefit from this record, the godly must be able to make the transition to their own lives, beholding and acknowledging the truth of Hebrews 13:5-6; “*Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.*” As confirmed in this text, God being with us and not forsaking us does not mean we will not pass through troublous times. When Gaius and Aristarchus were caught and dragged into the arena, it was probably not with gentleness and kindness. The insensitive soul might have reasoned, “Why is all of

this happening? Where is the Lord?” **Such thinking is too foolish to be found in the minds of those who live by faith.** The godly will be saved IN trouble, like Noah was saved DURING a flood, Daniel IN the lion’s den, and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego IN the furnace of fire.

In our time, there appears to be a great weakness among professing Christians concerning this type of thinking. There is also a reason for this serious deficiency. **Much of the preaching of our time centers in the well being and success of the believer.** The gospel that is being preached is man-centered rather than

arsenal, the nominal church has now become the purveyor of self-help methodologies that require the assistance of men more than the help of God Himself. All of this has created a religious environment that generates naive and uninformed disciples. What has always been common to believers now appears strange and unreasonable. When trouble arises, it raises questions instead of faith, and murmuring instead of prayers.

By way of contrast, our text does not speak of the impact of this trouble upon Gaius and Aristarchus. Instead, it focuses on how heaven reacted to their circumstance, moving upon men to act in the interest of

Even the law recognized the necessity of legitimacy in registering a complaint against someone – that is, a case in which one person had truly disadvantaged or harmed another. Among civilized people, and even among some barbarians, it is recognized that one person ought not to render disadvantages to another.

Christ-centered. It is a kind of dumbed-down self-help system designed to make people think they can do better, be better, and have more things – and that God will help them in these matters. This frothy nonsense is presented as though it represented the Divine focus, the reason for Christ’s reign, and the intention behind salvation. Having added the pseudo-science of psychology to its feeble

God’s children, even though they did not know that was the circumstance.

IF THEY HAVE A MATTER AGAINST ANY MAN

Wherefore if Demetrius, and the craftsmen which are with him, have a matter against any man . . .” Other versions read, “*have a case against anyone,*” ^{NKJV} “*have a complaint against*

any man,"^{NASB} "have a grievance against anybody,"^{NIV} and "have a protest to make against any man."^{BBE}

Even the law recognized the necessity of legitimacy in registering a complaint against someone – that is, a case in which one person had truly disadvantaged or harmed another. Among civilized people, and even among some barbarians, it is recognized that one person ought not to render disadvantages to another.

They felt the genuineness of a charge had to be substantiated. Whatever the motive may have been, this was sound thinking and reflected the intention for civil government – to encourage those who do good, and avenge those who do wrong (Rom 13:3-4). **Those who imagine the God-ordained purpose of government is to meet the needs of humanity are not correct.** That may be appropriate in encouraging those who do good, but it is not the primary purpose for civil authority. The difficulties our present government is having is largely traceable to the insufficient manner in which it carries out the revealed intention for its existence: to encourage those who do good, and to punish those who do evil. It is interesting to note that the heathen government of Rome, in spite of its moral deficiencies and idolatry, was more in harmony with this purpose than our own government. Our text is a case in point, as well as Paul's later appeal to Caesar as a means of experiencing some justice in the case that had been leveled against him by the Jews (Acts 25:11; 28:19).

THE LAW IS OPEN

"... the law is open, and there are deputies: let them implead one another" Other versions read, "the courts are open and there are proconsuls. Let them bring charges against one another,"^{NKJV} "the courts are in session and proconsuls are available; let them bring charges against one another,"^{NASB} "the courts are open and proconsuls are [available]; let them bring charges against one another [legally]."^{AMPLIFIED}

In the legal system of Rome, arrangements were made for registering legitimate complaints immediately: "the courts are in session, and the proconsuls are available."^{NASB} This approach reduced the possibility of anarchy or insurrection.

Means were made available to the people to settle grievances before they infected the fabric of society, or resulted in some form of violence.

DEPUTY or PROCONSUL

Over these senatorial provinces the senate appointed by lot yearly an officer who was called "proconsul," who exercised purely civil functions, had no power over life and death, and was attended by one or more legates. He was neither girt with the sword nor wore the military dress. He was chosen out of the body of the senate; and it was customary, when any one's consulate expired, to send him as a proconsul into some province . . . The proconsuls decided cases of equity and justice, either privately in their palaces, where they received petitions, heard complaints, and granted writs under their seals; or publicly in the common hall, with the formalities generally observed in the courts at Rome. ^{McCLINTOK & STRONGS'S}

Other deputies, or proconsuls, that are mentioned in the book of Acts include Sergius Paulus on the Island of Crete (Acts 13:7-12), and Gallio, who was the deputy or proconsul of Achaia (Acts 18:12). **It is interesting that in these two cases, as well as the one before us, the officials were in favor of the people of God.** These are most excellent examples of the meaning of Romans 14:18: "For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and **approved of men**" (Rom 14:18). Again the saints are admonished concerning, "Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also **in the sight of men**" (2 Cor 8:21). It is also said of Jesus during His youth, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and **in favor with God and man**" (Luke 2:52). It is to be noted that these texts refer to men of integrity who have some aptitude in discerning good and evil. I say this because believers are, under no circumstances, to conduct their lives in an effort to please men. Should they do this, they abruptly cease to be the servants of God. "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Gal 1:10). **However, we are to live in such a manner as to pass the approval of discerning men, who can decipher between right and wrong and just**

and unjust. This would have particular reference to civil authorities, not to the fickle men of the street.

In the Roman form of government, provisions were made in the legal system for both parties to present their cases to the proconsuls

This kind of arrangement antedated the Roman government, being put in place by the God of Israel. Early in their history, judges were established among the people for the purpose of resolving differences in a timely and just manner (Ex 21:22,28; 22:9; Deut 1:16; 16:19). Jesus also spoke of this arrangement, admonishing His disciples to avoid the necessity of a judge entering into their disputes (Matt 5:25; Luke 12:58).

In our day, it almost sounds strange to hear of a procedure that allows for the timely and just resolution of a legal dispute. This is certainly not the way that our legal system works. This is largely owing to the practical abandonment of God's law, and the institutions He has put in place for the purpose of maintaining social order. This entire circumstance has arisen because of the recalcitrance of the professed church. She is "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim 3:15), but has been obstreperous to her duty. **As of this time (2009), we are in the third generation of those who have not been exposed to the truth of God – at least not to any measurable degree.** Thus the demand for justice has given way to the interests of those with money and influence.

Justice is not guaranteed by government, but by the conscience of the people – a conscience that has been formed by the truth of God. Of old time, God required that His people, Israel, "do justice" (Isa 56:1). When that justice was not present, the people were soundly rebuked by the prophets: "None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity" (Isa 59:4). How poignantly this is stated by Isaiah: "And judgment is turned away backward, and **justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter**" (Isa 59:14). **Notice that the absence of justice was preceded by truth falling in the street because**

men did not take hold of it.

Solemnly Jeremiah told the people, “*did not thy father eat and drink, and do judgment and justice, and then it was well with him?*” (Jer 22:15). Ezekiel cried out, “*Thus saith the Lord GOD; Let it suffice you, O princes of Israel: remove violence and spoil, and execute judgment and justice, take away your exactions from my people, saith the Lord GOD*” (Ezek 45:9). At one point the prophet Micah summarized God’s requirement for Israel: “*He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?*” (Micah 6:8).

I believe you will find a certain

The early church could take serious issues to the apostles for resolution, as demonstrated in the congregation in Antioch of Syria (Acts 15:1-2). The church at Corinth, particularly those of the house of Chloe, made inquiry of Paul concerning certain uncomely manners that existed in Corinth – and received a prompt answer (1 Cor 1:11).

Why is this present disinterest in godly justice present in the church? It is for the same reason that is was found in Israel: “*truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey: and the LORD saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment*” (Isa 59:14-15). **This circumstance still displeases the**

to take matters into their own hands, for that would lead to anarchy and social rebellion. Even the Roman government knew that a house divided against itself will fall (Matt 12:28). **Further, especially in a social setting, division is the ultimate child of controversy.**

Also observe that the civil system made provision for the protection of the society – it held town meetings, and the leader was the town clerk. **Even the heathen knew that the undue exaltation of personal interests was not proper.** The whole of society must be the preeminent concern, not the rights of the individual. This, of course, can only be done within the broader perimeter of justice, which seeks the encouragement of good and the punishment of evil.

A Principle for Believers

The same principle holds true in the body of Christ. That is because God Himself is the Author of both. Of course, within the church, the principle is carried out more fully, as well as more precisely. Solemnly believers are told, “*Let no man seek his own, but every man another’s wealth*” (1 Cor 10:24). Again, speaking for himself Paul said, “*Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved*” (1 Cor 10:33).

How is it possible to fit that into a health and wealth gospel – which is really no gospel at all? Again, when dispensing spiritual gifts to the church, the Divine objective was not to make the individual satisfied and successful, but to bring profit to the whole body. Thus it is written, “*But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal*” (1 Cor 12:7). Other versions read, “*the profit of all,*”^{NKJV} “*the common good,*”^{NASB} “*the common good of everyone,*”^{GWN} “*the general good,*”^{NJB} “*profit the congregation,*”^{TNT} and “*helping the entire church.*”^{LIVING} Again believers are admonished, “*Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others*” (Phil 2:4).

Once again, the approval of men, or their acceptance, postulates men of integrity who are not personally hostile to believers. There is no possible way that any other kind of people could approve of those who live

The point here is that the civil government had appointed a convenient and thorough manner for addressing social difficulties. The people were not permitted to take matters into their own hands, for that would lead to anarchy and social rebellion.

consistency in human history on this matter. **When the truth of God was not upheld by His people, there was a marked tendency to injustice.** In fact, much of the injustice takes place within the professed church itself, just as it did in Israel when they persecuted, and even killed, their own prophets. This is not to mention their opposition to Jesus Christ, the stoning of Stephen, the hounding of Paul, and the sanction of Herod arresting Peter. I myself have been the recipient of injustice by organized religion. I could easily recite the names of a staggering number of believers who have suffered under the bludgeon of injustice from the professed church. Were you able to summon to the witness stand those who have been treated unjustly by their religious peers, your mind would not be able to process what you saw.

I know of no available resource that is noted for resolving religious conflicts, doing so in as timely and just manner. By Divine appointment, the Jews had such resources.

Lord – especially now that Jesus has been exalted to His right hand, and adequate resources have been made available to men. The thing that makes the whole situation disgraceful is that a town-clerk of Ephesus, himself validating the worship of Diana, had a greater sense of justice than many Christian leaders of our day. He was able to discern wrong motives more quickly, and stood against a mob in the interest of justice.

OTHER MATTERS REQUIRE A LAWFUL ASSEMBLY

“*But if ye inquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly.*” Other versions read, “*legal assembly,*”^{NIV} “*regular assembly,*”^{NRSV} “*in the place assigned by law for an assembly,*”^{MRD} “*regular City Council meetings,*”^{LIVING} and “*regular town meeting of the people.*”^{IE}

The point here is that the civil government had appointed a convenient and thorough manner for addressing social difficulties. The people were not permitted

unto the Lord, not for themselves, and in the interest of others. This is why Paul committed himself to the consciences of his readers: *“But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God”* (2 Cor 4:2).

THE DANGER OF HAVING NO CAUSE

“For we are in danger to be called in question for this day’s uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse.” Other versions read, *“give an account for this disorderly gathering,”* ^{NKJV} *“account for this commotion,”* ^{NIV} *“justify this commotion,”* ^{NRSV} *“because we have assembled needlessly, and been tumultuous without a cause,”* ^{MRD} *“if Rome demands an explanation, we won’t know what to say,”* ^{NLT} and *“called to render an account and of being accused of rioting because of [this commotion].”* ^{AMPLIFIED}

The town clerk was thinking of giving an account to the authorities, and he knew that it would not be possible to give an adequate one. Of course, Demetrius and those who had been stirred by his emotional speech had conveniently forgotten that they might have to defend their action before the legal authorities to which they were subject. Like all who are dominated by self-justification, seeking their own interests, they gave no thought to the future, or how this would appear to those who had a larger interest than that of the rioting mob.

That is what sin does to those it rules. **It blots from the mind all thoughts of accountability, and facing one greater than themselves, to whom they will have to give an explanation.** However, they will have to do so anyway. In this text, it was possible that the crowd would have to face the Roman authorities and explain what was worthy of stirring up the whole city. The town clerk knew they would not be able to give a satisfactory answer to the officials – even though, at the time, their gathering seemed perfectly reasonable to them. However, that was only because they were blinded by rage, and dulled by their self-centeredness.

THE DAY OF JUDGMENT

I cannot leave this section without commenting on the great day of accountability that is on the appointed

the Revelation contains eleven such references. What possible reason can be adduced for the remarkable silence on this subject in the pulpits of the land?

By failing to teach

By failing to teach extensively on this subject, the preachers and teachers have put the people in a very precarious situation. A due consideration of the day of judgment will put up a roadblock to the expression of sin. It will lessen the possibility of acting in an ungodly manner.

horizon – the day of judgment. Unlike the time the town clerk feared, **the day of judgment is inevitable.** It is, after all, *“appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment”* (Heb 9:27). Solemnly men are reminded that God *“commandeth all men every where to repent: Because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead”* (Acts 17:31). Even those in Christ are warned, *“So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God”* (Rom 14:12). Again we are told, *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad”* (2 Cor 5:10).

I know that it is not fashionable these days to speak with certainty about the day of judgment. **There are multitudes of professing Christians who have never heard a sound exegesis of the day of judgment.** They live their lives day in and day out without a solitary thought of standing before God in that day. There are eight Scriptural texts that use the expression *“the day of judgment”* (Matt 10:15; 11:22,24; 12:36; Mk 6:11; 2 Pet 2:9; 3:7; 1 John 4:17). There are one hundred and ninety two Scriptural references to that day (Twenty-eight from Genesis through Malachi, and one hundred and sixty-four from Matthew through Revelation). Jesus Himself spoke of that time one hundred and nine times. The book of Acts refers to it six times. The epistles teach of it thirty-eight times, and

extensively on this subject, the preachers and teachers have put the people in a very precarious situation. A due consideration of the day of judgment will put up a roadblock to the expression of sin. It will lessen the possibility of acting in an ungodly manner. What person has ever asked himself the question, “How will I explain this action to God on the day of judgment?” without feeling a compulsion to draw back from sinful expressions. Even when people have been taught concerning this appointed day, they must ponder it for it to have a proper effect upon them. But what of those who do not hear about it – those whose minds are never brought to process the thought of standing before the Judge of all the earth and giving an account of what they have done, whether it is good or bad? **What are the practical possibilities of such people consistently resisting the devil or living by faith?**

The churches of our day should not allow themselves to be exposed to preaching and teaching that excludes timely and insightful references to the day of judgment. If the town clerk of Ephesus, with not so much as a solitary thought about the God of heaven and the day of judgment, thought it necessary to bring a halt to a hostile gathering, what ought to be said of some of the gatherings of our time? Verily, here is an example of one of the sayings of our blessed Lord, *“the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light”* (Luke 16:8). Salvation makes no allowance for such a condition. True wisdom is to reside with believers, and all the provisions have been given for this.

HE DISMISSED THE ASSEMBLY

“⁴¹ And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.” Other versions read, “*he sent the meeting away,*”^{BBE} “*Then he dismissed them, and they dispersed,*”^{NLT} “*he let the congregation depart,*”^{TNT} “*they dispersed,*”^{LIVING} “*Then all of the people left,*”^{IE} and “*he sent them home.*”^{MESSAGE}

There was no further need for the assembly, seeing that it was dangerous and unwise. Therefore, after presenting his case, the town clerk sent the people away. Apparently the mob saw the sense of what he said. Not wanting to put

of the local congregations experienced a serious upheaval. The minister had been so aggressive in turning people from darkness to light, that they were outgrowing their present facility. The leaders of the congregation, together with those who held them in high regard, opposed the influx of the new people, because they had come from a crude manner of life. Although genuinely converted, they were not schooled in the traditions of the leaders, and could not consent to the brevity and practical restraints that the leaders were imposing upon the people. After a lengthy period of

of prayer. I suggested the prayer be one of intercession, in which reasons for the church remaining be presented to God. I called for everyone to kneel before the Lord, assuming the posture of contrition and submission. Most of the people consented to this. After informing them that I would close the prayer session, the time of prayer began. After at least five rather lengthy minutes there had not been a single syllable uttered from the audience. I waited for another few minutes that confirmed no one in the audience was going to prayer. I then offered a petition to the Lord, after which I stood up, with the others assuming a seated position.

Religious men would do well to follow the line of reasoning presented in this text. If the gathering cannot be explained in a rational manner, and if it will put them at a disadvantage on the day of judgment, the meeting ought to be dismissed.

Instantly, hands shot up all through the audience, as people were anxious to present their cause. I refused to allow any of them to speak, saying that if they could not speak to God about this unfortunate situation, they had no right to speak to anyone else about it. I asked them to rise, pronounced the benediction, and sent them home. The people did leave courteously. I suppose that is the same way the people disbanded in the Ephesian amphitheater. Even so, I felt the name of the Lord was reproached, and His great salvation demeaned by such crude and uncivilized behavior. I was further called into account, and criticized, by local religious authorities for having anything to do with the gathering. I dismissed their objections as idle chatter driven by a sectarian spirit.

themselves at an unnecessary disadvantage, they consented to bring the meeting to a halt. This confirmed their primary interest in themselves, for they had thought nothing of dragging Gaius and Aristarchus into the amphitheater, and mounting a formal attack on Paul. However, when it came to their own experience, they did everything possible to take the political pressure off of themselves.

friction, a general meeting was called to resolve the differences – at least that is what the leaders said. I was personally asked to moderate this meeting, and consented to do so.

Religious men would do well to follow the line of reasoning presented in this text. **If the gathering cannot be explained in a rational manner, and if it will put them at a disadvantage on the day of judgment, the meeting ought to be dismissed.**

When I arrived at the meeting, the building was filled, and an unparalleled spirit of hostility was present. I had stepped into a war zone. The new and zealous converts sat on one side of the auditorium, together with a few of the members who agreed with them. The opposing members sat on the other side. Angry stares were all about, and several of the people were ready to erupt in lengthy speeches, the presentation of complaints, and the iteration of the official traditions of the church.

My point is that there are still volatile situations among professing believers that require the presence a “town clerk” type of individual – one who can assess the situation. However, there has been such a remarkable degeneracy in church life that people recoil from the correction of trouble, thereby allowing spiritual wounds to fester.

MY OWN EXPERIENCE

Sometime during 1993-1994, one

I called the meeting to order and informed them we would begin with a time

CONCLUSION

This text has confirmed the necessity of godly wisdom and of properly assessing a situation. Concerning the

involvement of Paul in this event, the brethren, together with several sympathetic rulers saw that it was not

wise to attend such a gathering. This was not simply something they saw, they acted upon their perception, thereby relieving

Having been stirred up by Demetrius the silversmith, the unbelievers of Ephesus erupt in chaos and disorder – by Given O. Blakely

Paul of a fruitless endeavor.

One might ask why Paul needed to be restrained in the first place. Should he not have known the proper response without being so directed by his brethren? We know that he saw the wisdom of their counsel, because he submitted to it. Here, it is necessary to see the nature of the body of Christ. The members, even when they are apostles, are in various ways dependent upon the rest of the body. This is because the Head of the body ministers through its various members, not restricting His direction to the apostles. For example, there were times when Paul had necessities that had to be met by other people (Phil 4:16; 2 Cor 12:10). There were times when he was succored, or helped, by other saints (Rom 16:2). Some brethren "ministered unto him" (Acts 19:22). On another occasion Julius, a centurion that was guarding him en route to Rome as a prisoner, "courteously entreated Paul, and gave him liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself" (Acts 27:3). By the hands of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus Paul was "refreshed" (1 Cor 16:17-18). When he was in Thessalonica the Philippian brethren sent "once and again" unto his "necessity" (Phil 4:16). Although

he was an apostle who "labored more abundantly than they all" (1 Cor 15:10), yet he could be "comforted together" with the brethren in Rome by their "mutual faith" (Rom 1:12). That is simply how the body of Christ works.

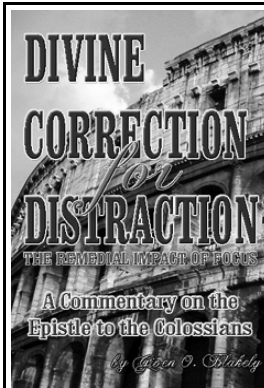
Add to this the assistance that was rendered by the town clerk of Ephesus, thereby giving an advantage to Paul. Julius the centurion "courteously entreated Paul," allowing him to go to his friends for refreshment (Acts 27:3). Later, when the ship on which Paul was sailing was breaking up during a fierce storm, a centurion was moved to not allow the killing of the prisoners, for he "was willing to save Paul" (Acts 27:43). Publius, a "chief man of the island" of Melita, lodged Paul and Silas for three days, and came to be healed of a "bloody flux" (Acts 28:7). The barbarians that occupied that island, where Paul and two hundred and seventy-five others were stranded due to a shipwreck, showed them "no little kindness," even kindling a fire for them to dry out and warm themselves (Acts 28:2). When many of the island were healed, they honored them with many honors, and gave them all of the supplies they needed when the time came for them to depart (Acts

28:9-10).

The point is that the Lord cares for His own, often using influential people of the world, as well as the members of His own body – the church.

It is good to remember these things when you face difficulties in this life. **When the saints are put to a disadvantage by illness, financial straits, or the hardships created by natural disasters, God can marshal a troop to sustain them.** He may draw a doctor like Luke into the situation, or a political official, or an employee of the government. He may incline a saint you have never before met, and some with whom you are familiar. People may see your situation and be inclined to render assistance to you, even though they do not know why they are acting in such a gracious manner. "The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein" (Psa 24:1). He can bring it all together to sustain you – and He is forward to do so for those who live by faith. Take heart, child of God, and never yield to despair. These things have been written for our admonition (Rom 15:4; 1 Cor 10:11).

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 8/28/09. We will continue our current series of lessons on the book of Acts. The Eighty-second lesson will cover verses 1 through 12 of the twentieth chapter: "PREACHING IN TROAZ." After the uproar at Ephesus subsides, Paul goes to Greece, where he remains for three months. He then purposes to return to Macedonia, finally coming to Troaz where Paul and those with him tarried for seven days. This proved to be a wonderful occasion for many. We are also introduced to the manners of early disciples. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.



A New Book
DIVINE CORRECTION for DISTRACTION
THE REMEDIAL IMPACT OF FOCUS

This is a commentary on the book of Colossians. Brother Blakely is currently editing this book for publication. Consisting of over 1,000 pages, this volume declares the revealed approach to distracting influences, particularly pertaining to doctrine.

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THE WORD OF TRUTH FELLOWSHIP

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BROTHER BLAKEY'S ON-LINE COMMENTARIES

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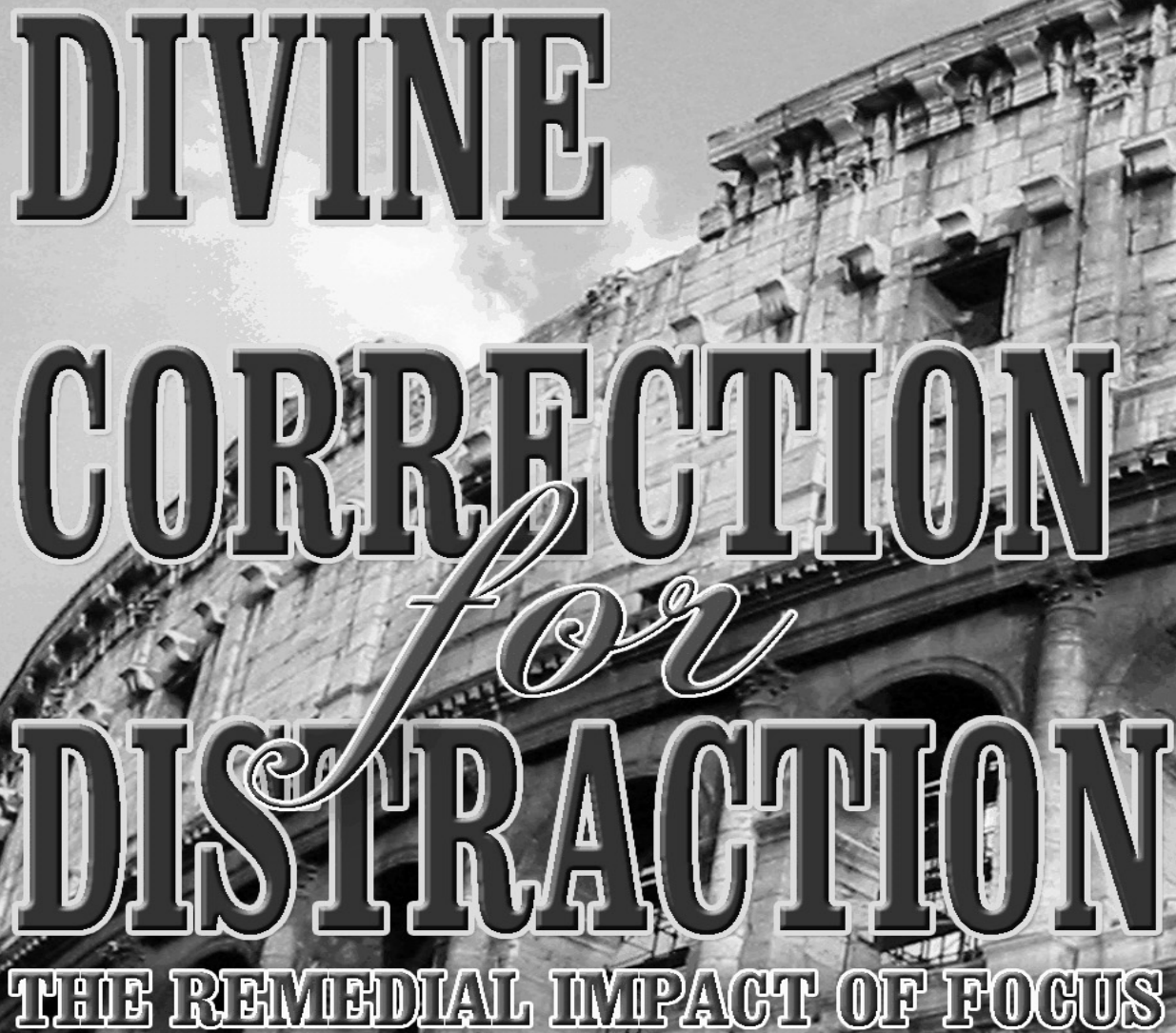
PARTICIPATING BROTHERS AND SISTERS SPEAKING/LEADING/MINISTERING IN THE ASSEMBLY

The Word of Truth Fellowship, Joplin, MO
DURING MAY, 2009

1. *Blakely, Benjamin* (AM Opening Thought).
2. *Given O. Blakely* (PM Sermon, PM Sermon, PM Sermon).
3. *Blakely, Jonathan* (AM Exhortation, AM Calling, PM Exhortation, PM Table Meditation).
4. *Blakely, June* (AM Calling, Teach AM Class).
5. *Blakely, Michael* (Play Piano, AM Sermon, AM Table Meditation, AM Sermon).
6. *Blakely, Michele* (Play Piano, Lead AM Singing).
7. *Brett Burlingame* (Lead AM Singing, PM Introduction).
8. *Cobb, Matthew* (AM Table Meditation).
9. *Cobb, Nicole* (Lead PM Singing, Lead PM Singing).
10. *Cobb, Robert* (AM Table Meditation, AM Sermon, Lead PM Singing).
11. *Hill, John* (Lead Intercessory Prayer).
12. *Hutchcraft, Aaron* (AM Opening Word, AM Exhortation, PM Table Meditation, PM Sermon).
13. *Hutchcraft, Barbara* (Lead AM Singing, PM Introduction, PM Introduction).
14. *Hutchcraft, Debbie* (Lead AM Singing).
15. *Hutchcraft, Gene* (Intercessory Prayer, Teach AM Class, Teach AM Class, PM Exhortation, PM Table Meditation).
16. *Hutchcraft, Judah* (Closing Scripture/Prayer, Read AM Sermon Text, Read PM Sermon Text, Introduction to PM Sermon).
17. *Julie Miller* (PM Introduction).
18. *Murphy, Mariah* (Special Piano Numbers for PM Message, Read AM Sermon Text, Read AM Sermon Text).
19. *Murphy, Micaela* (Read PM Sermon Text).
20. *Parker, Melissa* (AM Calling, Lead AM Singing).
21. *Parker, Tony* (AM Opening Word).
22. *Rebecca Scalf* (Lead PM Singing).
23. *Sims, Annie* (Lead AM Scripture Shower, Read PM Sermon Text).
24. *Sims, Baylie* (Read PM Sermon Text).
25. *Sims, Ricky* (AM Exhortation, AM Sermon, AM Exhortation, Teach AM Class, PM Table Meditation, Lead PM Singing).
26. *Sims, Tasha* (Closing Scripture/Prayer, Lead Scripture Shower, AM Calling).
27. *Stuhlman, Laura* (Closing Scripture/Prayer).
28. *Williams, Jeremy* (AM Opening Word, AM Table Meditation, PM Exhortation).
29. *Williams, Logan* (Play AM/PM Lord's Table Interlude, Lead Scripture Shower, Read AM Sermon Text).
30. *Williams, Sydney* (Closing Scripture/Prayer).
31. *Preparing Lord's Supper* (Various sisters).

THE BODY OF CHRIST

It is a fact: ***"But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him"*** (1 Cor 12:18). He did not set them in the home, but ***"in the body."*** He did not place them in society, but ***"in the body."*** They are functioning members of the body who fill necessary functions – edifying roles in the solemn assembly (1 Cor 12:19-27). The functioning value and ministry of ***"the body"*** is realized when it is ***"together,"*** not when the people are separated. The ministry of each member is determined by their faith – ***"a measure of faith"*** that has been given to them in order to the ***"profit"*** of the entire body (Rom 12:6-8; 1 Cor 12:7). This is how the Lord has put together ***"the church, which is His body"*** (Eph 1:22-23). We make no apologies for the ministry of the entire body – publicly, in the assembly, and in order to the edification of the saints. This is all done in an orderly manner, with due thoughtfulness and regard for those who are in Christ Jesus, and who, in faithfulness to God who gave these various abilities. Our assemblies are designed to allow for the various expressions and insightful responses of all who are of honest and good heart, have faith, and are in, and living for, the Lord Jesus.



DIVINE
CORRECTION
for
DISTRACTION
THE REMEDIAL IMPACT OF FOCUS

**A Commentary on the
Epistle to the Colossians**

by Given O. Blakely

Having been stirred up by Demetrius the silversmith, the unbelievers of Ephesus erupt in chaos and disorder – by Given O. Blakely