Crossroads International Church Singapore Dr. Rick Griffith

30 May 2021 Message 18 of 23

NLT 30 Minutes

Title

**The Peaceful Riot**

***Acts 19:21-41***

Capitol

(2 slides)

Portland

AD 49-52

Map

Beaten

• Thess

Peace-makers

Minnea-apolis

Series

AD 53-57

Girl

Cities

**Topic:** Peace

**Subject:** Who brings peace in society more—believers or unbelievers in Jesus?

**Complement:** Believers bring peace in society.

**Purpose:** The listeners will promote peace in society to advance the gospel.

**Attribute:** God of Peace

**Meditation:** 1 Pet 5:6-7

**Reading:** Eph 4:25–5:2

**Benediction:** 1 Pet 5:8-11

**Songs:** He is Our Peace (closing), It is Well, When Trials Come (Getty)

# Introduction

### Interest: Christians are increasingly accused of disturbing the peace—such as in the January 6 US Capitol riot. And yet unbelievers rioted far worse:

#### Portland had over 100 days of riots in 2020 that destroyed public buildings.

#### Milwaukie had rioting that destroyed 5 miles of buildings in 2020.

### Need: Jesus said, “Blessed are the peacemakers.” Are you a peacemaker? Do you know how to diffuse conflict?

### Subject: Who brings peace in society more—believers or unbelievers in Jesus?

Subjects

### Restatements: Who causes more trouble in our cultures—Christians or idolaters? Which is more harmful—idolatry or Christianity?

### Background: [Unbelievers in the Roman Empire in the AD 50s-60s suspected Christians to be troublemakers—but Paul made plans to leave Ephesus peacefully (19:21-22).]

#### In our series in Acts called Good News on the Move, we are now in Acts 19. Missionary journey #2 is behind us into Europe, and now the focus is Asia.

#### Before this time, Christianity had already shown itself peaceful a number of times:

##### Owners of a slave girl in **Philippi** whom Paul and Silas had released from a demon had them ***beaten, flogged, and imprisoned***—but they prayed and sang in prison, which is not exactly rioting behavior (16:16-25). These men caused no riot—rather, they were the *victims* of the riot caused by others!

##### Jews in **Thessalonica** jealous of Paul convincing some fellow Jews that Jesus was Messiah, accused Paul and Silas of causing trouble all over the world (17:6), recruited bad characters and caused a ***riot*** (17:2-5). These men caused no riot—rather, they were the *victims* of the riot caused by others!

##### After kicking them out of Thessalonica, these Jews even traveled to **Berea** and agitated the crowds so the apostles ***got kicked out*** of Berea too (17:13-14). These men caused no riot—but they were *victims* of the riot caused by others!

• Berea

##### At **Athens**, Epicurean and Stoic philosophers ***ridiculed Paul publicly***, but Paul gave a reasoned defense. Paul caused no riot—rather, he was the *victim* of the sneering of others (17:18, 32).

• Athens

##### In **Corinth**, Jews ***abused*** Paul (18:6), but Paul only shook out his clothes in response. Paul caused no abuse to them—rather, his friend Sosthenes was the *victim* of their abuse right in front of the government official (18:17).

• Corinth

• Ephesus

Breasts

MP

Video

##### At **Ephesus**, Jews publicly ***maligned*** Paul and ***expelled him from the synagogue*** (19:9). Paul healed people and caused no commotion, but a demon that beat seven sons of a Jewish priest did (19:16)!

#### In Acts 19:1-20, Paul had taught in Ephesus’s School of Tyrannus (19:9). “This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord” (Acts 19:10 NIV).

19:20

19:10

#### The result was “the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power” (19:20). Here is Progress Report #7 in the book as the gospel advanced.

Progress Reports

#### A demon had just beaten up men leading to the public burning of sorcery scrolls (19:21a; cf. verses 13-20).

19:21-22

Map

19:21-22

#### Rather than let this lead to a riot, Paul planned to leave for Rome (21:21b-22).

### Preview/Text: Let’s first see the real troublemaker in Acts 19:23-31 and then learn how not to be troublemakers today.

(So who was the actual rabblerouser in Acts 19:23-41? Let’s watch a 4-minute video of this story…)

# I. The idol maker Demetrius began the Ephesus riot—not the peaceful Paul (19:23-41).

[A financial motive of the craftsmen led to unrest—not Paul’s preaching.]

## The idolater Demetrius accused Paul of trouble-making and apostasy (19:23-27).

Ephesus

### Demetrius stirred up craftsmen against Paul cutting their profit from idols (19:23-27a).

#### That he cared more about the money may be supported in that Demetrius noted their income first (19:25).

Culture

Marble Roads

#### He also later repeated how their trade would lose its good name (19:27a).

### But Demetrius also said that he sought the honor of Artemis (19:27b).

Wonder Women

#### Artemis was the key figure in Ephesus, Asia’s capital city.[[1]](#footnote-1) —essentially the Ancient Wonder Woman!

##### Artemis had many breasts to symbolize her ability to nourish the earth.

##### She was goddess of nature and fertility.

##### As one who fell from the sky, Artemis had miraculous powers to heal the sick and regulate the economy.

##### The Ephesians devoted one entire month each year to honor her. Businesses closed shop, people gathered for athletic games along with orgies, feasting, and carousing. Thousands attended, including many from other cities of Asia.

#### Why was the temple of Artemis so significant (24)?[[2]](#footnote-2)

Seven Wonders

##### It was one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

##### An amazing 127 columns surrounded it, each beautifully sculptured at the base.

Temple

2017

Temple Then

• Rome

• Affirmed

Clerk

Not Rioters

• Legal

• Pride

##### It took 120 years to build (c. 550 BC), said the historian Pliny the Elder!

##### It even likely had a bank inside—typical of many ancient temples—but is a far cry from its former glory today.

## Demetrius caused the riot—not Paul—whom the clerk defended (19:28-41).

Theater 25,000

### The attack from Demetrius led to a two-hour riot in the theater (19:28-34).

#### Why was rushing into the theater significant (29)?

##### This was the largest gathering place in Ephesus.

##### It could hold 25,000 people!

#### Why would Paul want to enter an arena of hostile fanatics who would be in an uproar for two hours (30)?

##### Paul looked for every chance to share the gospel, even if his life was in danger.

##### Paul evidently supposed that God would enable him to give a reasonable defense of the gospel.

#### Why did some of provincial officials also prevent Paul from entering the theatre (31)?

##### These rulers “would not let him get caught in the riot. They were *Asiarchs* (lit., ‘rulers of Asia’), in charge of the community’s political and religious welfare. They would be on good terms with Rome and therefore would evidence Christianity’s good standing with the government.”[[3]](#footnote-3)

##### If Paul entered there, a rumor may have started that said he caused the riot.

### The clerk wisely calmed the crowd by defending both Artemis and Paul (19:35-41).

#### He enticed their pride, saying Ephesus guarded Artemis from heaven (19:35-36).

#### He cleared Gaius and Aristarchus (and, in effect, Paul) of any crime (19:37).

#### He encouraged legal charges, knowing the crowd wouldn’t do it (19:38-39).

#### He warned that Rome might hear of their riot and punish the city (19:40-41).

(So Paul and the early Christians did not stir up trouble in Acts. But what about today?)

# II. Believers bring peace in society (Main Idea).

MI

[Christians are the best ones to bring harmony in the unbelieving world.]

Bull

## Idolatry leads to trouble.

Diana

### The uproar at Ephesus proved Christianity innocent of wrongdoing but idolatry useless.

Idols of Heart

### Not all idols are gold, silver, bronze, and wood. Ezekiel 14:3-6 warns of the idols of the heart. An idol is anything that takes God’s place in us.

#### ***Money***can take first place in our hearts. The millionaire “Aristotle Onassis once said, ‘All that matters in this life is money. It is the people with money who are the royalty in our generation.’ Ultimately he discovered that he had leaned the ladder of his life against the wrong wall. When he died, the only person at his side was his daughter; his money brought no comfort.”[[4]](#footnote-4)

• Entertain

• Drinking

Gospel to Peace

Plant

• Pride

(3 slides)

• Science

• Money

• Food

• Sex

• Power

• Pleasure

#### ***Power*** can take first place in our hearts.

#### ***Sex*** can take first place in our hearts.

#### ***Food*** can take first place in our hearts.

#### ***Pleasure*** can take first place in our hearts.

#### ***Entertainment*** can take first place in our hearts.

#### ***Drinking*** can take first place in our hearts.

#### ***Science*** can take first place in our hearts.

#### ***Pride*** can take first place in our hearts.

## The gospel leads to peace.

### Idolatry brings turmoil; Christianity brings peace.

#### Unbelievers in the Roman Empire often leveled unfair attacks against Christians, accusing them of causing riots and even being guilty of incest and cannibalism.

#### Luke never mentions these objections directly in Acts—but he does show what they *did* do when they peacefully presented the gospel.

#### This narrative gives another account of unbelievers accusing believers of the very violence that they themselves foment.

#### This reminds us to *continue the peaceful proclamation of the gospel that characterized the early church.*

### Belief in Jesus divides families but also brings harmony today.

Reconcile

#### “I will bring a sword”—Jesus

#### “Peace I leave with you”—Jesus

#### But that sword is not ours to wield—it is a sword others use against us!

Subject

(Who brings peace in society more—believers or unbelievers in Jesus?)

# Conclusion

### Believers bring peace in society (Main Idea). Look around the world and you will see that it is the Christians that produce harmony, but the violence that comes has them as the objects, not the perpetrators.

Prince of Peace

MI

### This is because our leader is the Prince of Peace (Main Points).

MPI

#### The idol maker Demetrius began the Ephesus riot—not the peaceful Paul (19:23-41).

#### Likewise, believers like us bring peace in society.

MPII

### Years ago judges conducted a peace painting contest.

Contest

#### Contestants submitted paintings of peaceful nature scenes of orchards or seascapes or forests and lakes.

• Bird

• Sea

• Lake

Waterfall

#### But the winner was actually a chaotic painting of lightning and a rushing waterfall. And if you look closely, amidst all that turbulence in the midst of the violent water was a mother bird sitting in her nest with her chicks.

#### Peace doesn’t come because our surroundings don’t have challenges. It comes from resting in Christ amidst those trials.

### Application: How can you exchange idols for peace in your own situation?

APP

#### We typically consider idols as man-made statues of gold, silver, or wood—but do you have any of those idols of the heart?

#### In what ways do you promote peace in society?

• Family

##### Strengthen the family—

###### I seek to do this by supporting Family Research Council.

###### Work on your marriage.

###### Do not support the slaughter of the most defenseless in society, the unborn.

##### Invest your money not where it will bring the highest profit, but where it will bless values-based organizations.

• Passions

• Money

#### In what ways do you disturb peace in society?

##### Facebook posts can often enflame passions—so, as a general rule, I don’t make political pronouncements on FB.

##### Do not spread fake news. I quoted a so-called article this month but had to follow up with an apology when I discovered that it did not exist.

### The chorus “He is Our Peace” written in 1975 tells us that Jesus has broken down every wall, so we can cast our cares on him. Let’s do it as we sing together.

He is Our Peace

### Prayer

Prayer

# Preliminary Questions

**Verses Questions**

# Context: What did the author record just prior to this passage?

### Before Acts 19, Christianity had already shown itself peaceful a number of times (see Background below).

### In Acts 19:1-20, Paul had taught in Ephesus’s School of Tyrannus (19:9). “This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord” (Acts 19:10 NIV).

### A demon had just beaten men leading to the public burning of sorcery scrolls (21:21a; cf. verses 13-20).

### Rather than use this as cause for a riot, Paul planned to leave for Rome (21:21b-22).

### The result was “the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power” (19:20).

# Purpose: Why is this passage in the Bible?

### Unbelievers in the Roman Empire often leveled unfair attacks against Christians, accusing them of causing riots and even being guilty of incest and cannibalism.

### Luke never mentions these objections directly in Acts—but he does show what they *did* do when they peacefully presented the gospel.

### This narrative gives another account of unbelievers accusing believers of the very violence that they themselves foment.

### This reminds us to *continue the peaceful proclamation of the gospel that characterized the early church.*

# Background: What historical context helps us understand this passage?

### Before Acts 19, Christianity had already shown itself peaceful a number of times:

#### Owners of a slave girl in **Philippi** whom Paul and Silas had released from a demon had them ***beaten, flogged, and imprisoned***—but they prayed and sang in prison, which is not exactly rioting behavior (16:16-25). These men caused no riot—rather, they were the *victims* of the riot caused by others!

#### Jews in **Thessalonica** jealous of Paul convincing some fellow Jews that Jesus was Messiah, accused Paul and Silas of causing trouble all over the world (17:6), recruited bad characters and caused a ***riot*** (17:2-5). These men caused no riot—rather, they were the *victims* of the riot caused by others!

#### After kicking them out of Thessalonica, these Jews even traveled to **Berea** and agitated the crowds so the apostles ***got kicked out*** of Berea as well (17:13-14). These men caused no riot—rather, they were the *victims* of the riot caused by others!

#### At **Athens**, Epicurean and Stoic philosophers ***ridiculed Paul publicly***, but Paul gave a reasoned defense. Paul caused no riot—rather, he was the *victim* of the sneering of others (17:18, 32).

#### In **Corinth**, Jews ***abused*** Paul (18:6), but Paul only shook out his clothes in response. Paul caused no abuse to them—rather, his friend Sosthenes was the *victim* of their abuse right in front of the government official (18:17).

#### At **Ephesus**, Jews publicly ***maligned*** Paul and ***expelled him from the synagogue*** (19:9). Paul healed people and caused no commotion, but a demon beat seven sons of a Jewish priest did (19:16)!

### Opposition to the Gospel in Acts came primarily from Jews:

#### “In only two incidents recorded in Acts did Gentiles oppose Paul: (a) here and (b) in the case of the Philippian fortune-teller (16:16–24). In both cases the opposition was because of vested monetary interests.”[[5]](#footnote-5)

#### One might also add to that the Athenian philosophers noted above in Acts 17.

### What is idolatry—then and now?

#### We typically consider idols as man-made statues of gold, silver, or wood.

#### But Ezekiel refers to “idols of the heart” that are far more subtle. An idol is anything that takes God’s place in us.

##### ***Money***can take first place in our hearts. The millionaire “Aristotle Onassis once said, ‘All that matters in this life is money. It is the people with money who are the royalty in our generation.’ Ultimately he discovered that he had leaned the ladder of his life against the wrong wall. When he died, the only person at his side was his daughter; his money brought no comfort.”[[6]](#footnote-6)

##### ***Power*** can take first place in our hearts.

##### ***Sex*** can take first place in our hearts.

##### ***Food*** can take first place in our hearts.

##### ***Pleasure*** can take first place in our hearts.

##### ***Entertainment*** can take first place in our hearts.

##### ***Drinking*** can take first place in our hearts.

##### ***Science*** can take first place in our hearts.

##### ***Pride*** can take first place in our hearts.

# Questions

### What trades might have been represented before Demetrius (23)?

#### Silver was the chief metal used.

#### But Artemis idols were always closed, so presumably some made little dresses or stands or whatever would supplement the idols.

### Who was the goddess Artemis (24)?

#### “Actually two goddesses in Asia Minor were named **Artemis**.

##### “The one, a goddess worshiped in Greek culture whose counterpart in Rome was Diana, was the virgin goddess of the hunt.

##### “The other was Artemis of the Ephesians, a many-breasted goddess of fertility. Probably the original “statue” was a meteorite that resembled a woman with many breasts (cf. 19:35).”[[7]](#footnote-7)

#### Most other scholars disagree with the idea of two goddesses called Artemis.[[8]](#footnote-8)

##### She was portrayed with many breasts to symbolize her ability to nourish the earth.

##### She was goddess of nature and fertility.

##### As one who fell from the sky, she had miraculous powers to heal the sick and regulate the economy.

##### The Ephesians devoted one entire month each year to honor her. Businesses closed shop, people gathered for athletic games along with orgies, feasting, and carousing. Thousands attended, including many from other cities of Asia.

### Why was the temple of Artemis so significant (24)?[[9]](#footnote-9)

#### It was one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

#### An amazing 127 columns surrounded it, each beautifully sculptured at their base.

#### The temple took 120 years to build (Pliny)![[10]](#footnote-10)

#### It even likely had a bank inside—typical of many ancient temples.

### Was the concern of Demetrius primarily financial or the honor of Artemis (23-28)?

#### That he cared more about the money may be supported in that Demetrius noted their income first (19:25) and then later repeated how important their trade would lose its good name (19:27a).

#### But he also mentioned the honor of Artemis (19:27b).

#### Perhaps his concern was both.

### How could a goddess “be robbed of her divine majesty” (27b)?

#### Imagine our God being robbed of his majesty by us neglecting to worship him!

#### Artemis could only experience such shame if she was dependent upon people instead of the other way around!

#### Assuming that the “this” of verse 28 refers to Artemis being robbed of honor, the fellow artisans seem to be more concerned about her honor than their means of making a living as that is what caused their two-hour rant (28).

### Why was rushing into the theater significant (29)?

#### This was the largest gathering place in Ephesus.

#### It could hold 25,000 people!

### Why would Paul want to enter an arena of hostile fanatics who would be in an uproar for two hours (30)?

#### Paul looked for every opportunity to share the gospel, even if his life was in danger.

#### Paul evidently supposed that God would enable him to give a reasonable defense of the gospel.

### Why did some of the provincial officials also prevent Paul from entering the theatre (31)?

#### These rulers “would not let him get caught in the riot. They were *Asiarchs* (lit., ‘rulers of Asia’), in charge of the community’s political and religious welfare. They would be on good terms with Rome and therefore would evidence Christianity’s good standing with the government.”[[11]](#footnote-11)

#### Had Paul entered the theatre a rumor may have started that said he caused the riot.

### Who is the Alexander that was pushed in front of the crowd (33) since they had seized Gaius and Aristarchus (29)?

#### The text does not say more than him being a Jew.

#### He obviously would oppose idolatry but we do not even know if he was part of Paul’s traveling team.

### What strategy did the city clerk use to quiet the crowd (19:35-41)?

#### He enticed their pride, saying Ephesus guarded Artemis from heaven (19:35-36).

#### He affirmed Gaius and Aristarchus (and, in effect, Paul) cleared of any crime (19:37).

#### He encouraged the crowd to legal charges, knowing they wouldn’t do it (19:38-39).

#### He warned that Rome might hear of their illegal rally and punish the city (19:40-41).

# Tentative Subject/Complement Statements

The uproar at Ephesus proved Christianity innocent of wrongdoing but idolatry useless.

Idolatry brings turmoil; Christianity brings peace.

Believers bring peace.

# Outlines

### New Testament Survey (Rick Griffith)

# III. Believers should witness to all the world because God expanded the kingdom message to Rome to reach the end of the known world (Acts 9–28).

## God saved Saul who preached even beyond Judea and Samaria in Damascus of Syria as God's tool to reach Jews and especially Gentiles (9:1-31).

*Progress Report #4: “Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord” (9:31).*

## God protected believers in Samaria and in Gentile cities of Caesarea and Antioch despite Jerusalem church racism as he was committed to the uttermost part (9:32–12:24).

### Peter reached Gentiles in Joppa, Lydda, and Caesarea [all in Samaria] despite racist Jerusalem believers as God’s kingdom message is for all (9:32–11:18).

### The Gentile church in Antioch alleviated famine in the Jerusalem church to show God's blessing on its ministry (11:19-29).

### God avenged Herod's murder of James and imprisonment of Peter at Jerusalem in Peter's miraculous escape and Herod's death by worms (12:1-24).

*Progress Report #5: “But the word of God continued to increase and spread” (12:24).*

## God expanded the church to Asia Minor in Paul and Barnabas’s two missionary journeys and the Jerusalem Council approved witness to Gentiles (12:25–16:5).

### The first missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas extended the kingdom message to Cyprus and Asia Minor (12:25–14:28).

### The Jerusalem Council decision not to require the Law for Gentiles was directed by God to expand the kingdom message through the Roman Empire (15:1-35).

### The second missionary journey of Paul and Silas strengthened Asia Minor churches and Barnabas and John Mark went to Cyprus due to a ministry conflict (15:36–16:5).

(Note: Second Missionary Journey = Acts 15:36–18:22)

*Progress Report #6: “So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew in numbers” (16:5).*

## God extended the church to the Aegean area after keeping Paul from Asia so he could first evangelize Macedonia and Achaia (16:6–19:20).

### Paul was called to Macedonia after Phrygia and Galatia but kept from Asia by the Spirit as God planned the kingdom message first to reach Europe (16:6-10).

### The second missionary journey became the third as God directed Paul, Silas, Luke, and Timothy to extend the church into Macedonia, Achaia, and Ephesus (16:11–19:20).

#### The end of the second missionary journey extended the church into Macedonia and Achaia (16:11–18:22).

##### Luke helped Paul plant churches in the Macedonian cities of Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea (16:11–17:15).

##### Paul evangelized Athens and Corinth in Achaia and then left Priscilla and Aquila in Ephesus while he returned to Antioch (17:16–18:22).

#### The third missionary journey began by confirming churches in Galatia, Phrygia, and Ephesus with miracles and exorcisms (18:23–19:20).

*(Note: Third Missionary Journey = Acts 18:23–21:16)*

*Progress Report #7: “In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power” (19:20)*

## God extended the kingdom message to Roman rulers after Paul’s third missionary journey led to his trip to Rome as a prisoner (19:21–28:31).

### Paul’s third journey had Luke and started no new churches but strengthened Aegean area believers, especially in Ephesus, until it ended in Jerusalem (19:21–21:16).

#### The uproar at Ephesus proved Christianity innocent of wrongdoing but idolatry useless (19:21-41).

#### Paul bade farewell to the Ephesian church by exhorting the elders to care for the flock in light of future apostasy (20:1-38).

#### Paul continued to Jerusalem despite prophecies of suffering ahead of him (21:1-16).

### Paul's journey to Rome had three captivities where God extended the kingdom message among rulers to Rome as a sending base to the end of the world (21:17–28:31).

#### Paul's Jerusalem captivity spread the gospel to his own Jewish people, a Roman officer, and a new Sanhedrin with Roman protection to Caesarea (21:17–23:22).

#### Paul's Caesarean captivity extended the kingdom message to Governor Felix, Porcius Festus, and King Agrippa II all under Roman support (23:23–26:32).

#### Paul's captivity in Rome extended the gospel to Gentile passengers and Malta dwellers en route to Jews and Gentiles unhindered in Rome (Acts 27–28).

*Progress Report #8: “For two whole years Paul stayed there [in Rome] in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ” (28:30-31).*

### Toussaint, “Acts,” *Bible Knowledge Commentary*

### Wiersbe, *Bible Exposition Commentary*

# Possible Illustrations

### The atheist Richard Dawkins confessed that he knew of not even one Christian terrorist.

### Portland had over 100 days of riots in 2020 that destroyed public buildings.

### Milwaukie had rioting that destroyed 5 miles of buildings in 2020.

### The atheist Richard Dawkins confessed that he knew of not even one Christian terrorist.

### The Christian tribe in Borneo resulted in peace.

# PPT Text Boxes

Title

# Possible Applications

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### In what ways do you promote peace in society?

#### Work to strengthen the family—I seek to do this by supporting Family Research Council.

#### Do not support the slaughter of the most defenseless in society, the unborn.

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### In what ways do you disturb peace in society?

#### Facebook posts can often enflame passions—so, as a general rule, I don’t make political pronouncements on FB.

#### Do not spread fake news. I quoted a so-called article this past week but had to follow up with an apology when I discovered that it did not exist.

**The Peaceful Riot**

***Acts 19:21-41***

**Exegetical Outline (Steps 2-3)**

# *Exegetical Idea*: The one who caused the Ephesian riot was the idol maker Demetrius rather than the peaceful Paul.

# I. The setting for the Ephesian riot was Paul’s plan to leave Ephesus peacefully for Rome (19:21-22).

## A demon had just beaten men leading to the public burning of sorcery scrolls (21:21a; cf. verses 13-20).

## Rather than use this as cause for a riot, Paul planned to leave for Rome (21:21b-22).

# II. The one who accused Paul of trouble-making and leading others astray in Asia was the idolater Demetrius (19:23-27).

## Demetrius stirred up various craftsmen against Paul, whose preaching would decrease their profit from reduced idol shopping (19:23-27a).

## But Demetrius also said that he sought the honor of Artemis (19:27b).

# III. The one who actually caused the riot was Demetrius rather than Paul as seen in the city clerk’s defense of Paul (19:28-41).

## The attack from Demetrius led to a two-hour riot in the theater (19:28-34).

## The city clerk wisely appeased the crowd with a strategy of defending both Artemis and Paul (19:35-41).

### He appealed to their pride by claiming that Ephesus was unique as the guardian city of Artemis whose image fell from heaven (19:35-36).

### He declared Gaius and Aristarchus (and, by implication, Paul) innocent of any crime (19:37).

### He encouraged the crowd to pursue legal charges, knowing that they would not do it (19:38-39).

### He warned that Rome could hear of their illegal assembly and punish the city (19:40-41).

**Purpose or Desired Listener Response (Step 4)**

The listeners will promote peace in society to advance the gospel.

**Homiletical Outline** (simple inductive form)

# Introduction

### Interest: Christians are increasingly accused of disturbing the peace—such as in the January 6 US Capitol riot. And yet unbelievers rioted far worse.

### Need: Jesus said, “Blessed are the peacemakers.” Are you a peacemaker? Do you know how to diffuse conflict?

### Subject: Who brings peace in society more—believers or unbelievers in Jesus?

### Restatements: Who causes more trouble in our cultures—Christians or idolaters? Which is more harmful—idolatry or Christianity?

### Background: [Unbelievers in the Roman Empire in the AD 50s-60s suspected Christians to be troublemakers—but Paul made plans to leave Ephesus peacefully (19:21-22).]

### Preview/Text: Let’s first see the real troublemaker in Acts 19:23-31 and then learn how not to be troublemakers today.

(So who was the actual rabblerouser in Acts 19:23-41? Let’s watch a 4-minute video of this story…)

# I. The idol maker Demetrius began the Ephesus riot—not the peaceful Paul (19:23-41).

## The idolater Demetrius accused Paul of trouble-making and apostasy (19:23-27).

### Demetrius stirred up craftsmen against Paul cutting their profit from idols (19:23-27a).

### But Demetrius also said that he sought the honor of Artemis (19:27b).

## Demetrius caused the riot—not Paul—whom the clerk defended (19:28-41).

### The attack from Demetrius led to a two-hour riot in the theater (19:28-34).

### The clerk wisely calmed the crowd by defending both Artemis and Paul (19:35-41).

#### He enticed their pride, saying Ephesus guarded Artemis from heaven (19:35-36).

#### He cleared Gaius and Aristarchus (and, in effect, Paul) of any crime (19:37).

#### He encouraged legal charges, knowing the crowd wouldn’t do it (19:38-39).

#### He warned that Rome might hear of their riot and punish the city (19:40-41).

(So Paul and the early Christians did not stir up trouble in Acts. But what about today?)

# II. Believers bring peace in society (Main Idea).

## Idolatry leads to trouble.

### The uproar at Ephesus proved Christianity innocent of wrongdoing but idolatry useless.

### Not all idols are gold, silver, bronze, and wood. Ezekiel 14:3-6 warns of the idols of the heart. An idol is anything that takes God’s place in us.

## The gospel leads to peace.

### Idolatry brings turmoil; Christianity brings peace.

### Belief in Jesus divides families but also brings harmony today.

#### “I will bring a sword”—Jesus

#### “Peace I leave with you”—Jesus

(Who brings peace in society more—believers or unbelievers in Jesus?)

# Conclusion

### Believers bring peace in society (Main Idea).

### This is because our leader is the Prince of Peace (Main Points).

### Years ago judges conducted a peace painting contest.

### Application: How can you exchange idols for peace in your own situation?

#### We typically consider idols as man-made statues of gold, silver, or wood—but do you have any of those idols of the heart?

#### In what ways do you promote peace in society?

#### In what ways do you disturb peace in society?

### The chorus “He is Our Peace” written in 1975 tells us that Jesus has broken down every wall, so we can cast our cares on him. Let’s do it as we sing together.

### Prayer





**Rick Griffith**

30 May 2021

Message 18 of 23

**The Peaceful Riot**

***Acts 19:21-41***

# Introduction

### Christians are increasingly falsely accused of disturbing the peace.

### Who brings peace in society more—believers or unbelievers in Jesus?

### Unbelievers in the Roman Empire in the AD 50s-60s suspected Christians to be troublemakers—but Paul made plans to leave Ephesus peacefully (19:21-22).

# I. The idol maker Demetrius began the Ephesus riot—not the peaceful Paul (19:23-41).

## The idolater Demetrius accused Paul of trouble-making and apostasy (19:23-27).

### Demetrius stirred up craftsmen against Paul cutting their profit from idols (19:23-27a).

### But Demetrius also said that he sought the honor of Artemis (19:27b).

## Demetrius caused the riot—not Paul—whom the clerk defended (19:28-41).

### The attack from Demetrius led to a two-hour riot in the theater (19:28-34).

### The clerk wisely calmed the crowd by defending both Artemis and Paul (19:35-41).

#### He enticed their pride, saying Ephesus guarded Artemis from heaven (19:35-36).

#### He cleared Gaius and Aristarchus (and, in effect, Paul) of any crime (19:37).

#### He encouraged legal charges, knowing the crowd wouldn’t do it (19:38-39).

#### He warned that Rome might hear of their riot and punish the city (19:40-41).

**II. Believers bring peace in society (Main Idea).**

## Idolatry leads to trouble.

### The Ephesus uproar proved Christianity innocent of wrongdoing but idolatry useless.

### Not all idols are gold, silver, and wood. Ezekiel 14:3-6 warns of the idols of the heart. An idol is anything that takes God’s place.

## The gospel leads to peace.

### Idolatry brings turmoil; Christianity brings peace.

### Belief in Jesus divides families but also brings harmony today.

#### “I will bring a sword”—Jesus

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# Conclusion

### Believers bring peace in society (Main Idea).

### How can you exchange idols for peace in your own situation?

#### Do you have any idols of the heart?

#### In what ways do you promote peace in society?

#### In what ways do you disturb peace in society?

### “He is Our Peace” tells us to cast all our cares on Jesus.

Download this sermon PPT and notes for free at BibleStudyDownloads.org/resource/new-testament-preaching/

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4. Sweeting and Sweeting, 159. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Stanley D. Toussaint, [“Acts,”](https://ref.ly/logosres/bkc?ref=Bible.Ac19.23-24&off=140&ctx=ee+comments+on+9:2.%0a~In+only+two+incident) in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 411. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
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7. Stanley D. Toussaint, [“Acts,”](https://ref.ly/logosres/bkc?ref=Bible.Ac19.23-24&off=350&ctx=monetary+interests.%0a~Actually+two+goddess) in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 411. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
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9. Sweeting and Sweeting, *The Acts of God,*156. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Pliny the Elder, *The Natural History* 21.14, trans. John Bostock, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.02.0137%3Abook%3D36%3Achapter%3D21>, accessed 17 May 2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Stanley D. Toussaint, [“Acts,”](https://ref.ly/logosres/bkc?ref=Bible.Ac19.30-31&off=253&ctx=als+of+the+province+~would+not+let+him+ge) in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 411–412. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)