

THE CONTINUATION OF THE BOOK OF ACTS 7

ACTS 19:26

26 Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands:

ACTS 19:27

27 So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth.

ACTS 19:28

28 And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.

ACTS 19:29

29 And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre.

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77-2 EPHESIAN. CHURCH. AGE - CHURCH. AGE. BOOK CPT. 3

The very religion of Ephesus types out perfectly this first church age and sets the tenor of the ages to come. In the first place, the magnificent temple of Diana,

that was so many years in building, housed in its sacred courts the most lusterless and unobtrusive, image of Diana that one could imagine.

She was absolutely unlike any other of her images seated in the other temples dedicated to her. She was simply an almost shapeless female figure that finally sunk into the block of wood from which she was carved.

And her two arms were formed of two simple bars of iron. How perfectly this depicts the spirit of antichrist loosed in the first age. There he was loosed in the midst of the people, and yet took no shape as to alarm the people.

Yet the two arms of iron bars showed that it was his intent to crush the work of God as he made his inroads. And no one seemed to notice him or what he was doing. But one day they would notice, when with those arms of iron his 'deeds' became 'doctrine', and his doctrine became the law of an empire.

77-3 EPHESIAN. CHURCH. AGE - CHURCH. AGE. BOOK CPT. 3

The order of temple service is also very revealing. There were, first of all, priests who were eunuchs.

This sterile priesthood presaged the sterility of a people who would drift from the Word, for a people who claim to know God apart from the Word are as barren of life as is a sterile eunuch.

Secondly, the temple had within its confines the virgin priestesses who performed the religious acts of the temple. This showed forth the day that ceremony and form, ritual and works, would take the place of the Holy Spirit and no longer would charismatic manifestation fill the temple of God.

Over them all was the high priest, a man of political power and public influence, portraying what was already in progress, though not too manifested, that is,

the church would soon be given over to the leadership of man with man's plans and man's ambitions and "thus saith the Holy Ghost" would no longer be a living reality.

And underneath them all were the temple slaves who had no choice but obedience to the religious hierarchy. What can this mean but the day would come when the vested clergy, by political maneuvering,

state help, and the substitution of Word and Spirit for creeds, dogmas, and human leadership, would enslave the laity while the leaders luxuriated in ill gotten wealth and enjoyed their filthy pleasures, and the poor people who were to be served according to God, now became the servants.

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ACTS 19:30

30 And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not.

ACTS 19:31

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.

ACTS 19:32

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.

ACTS 19:33

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.

ACTS 19:34

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.

ACTS 19:35

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?

ACTS 19:36

36 Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly.

ACTS 19:37

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

ACTS 19:38

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.

ACTS 19:39

39 But if ye enquire anything concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly.

ACTS 19:40

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.

ACTS 19:41

41 And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.

ACTS 20:1

1 And after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto him the disciples, and embraced them, and departed for to go into Macedonia.

82-2 EPHESIAN. CHURCH. AGE - CHURCH. AGE. BOOK CPT. 3

I think we ought to stop here and deal with the thought that God's people have always been and always will be persecuted. You know that Genesis is the book of beginnings,

and what you find started there will carry right on through the Revelation and never change. There we see that Cain persecuted and killed Abel because the latter pleased God.

Then we see a perfect picture in Abraham's son of the flesh, Ishmael, who teased and fought the son of promise, Isaac. And there was Esau, who hated Jacob and would have killed him, had not God intervened.

In the New Testament we find Judas betraying Jesus, while the religious orders of the first century attempted to destroy the early believers. The children of this world, controlled by the devil, hate the children of God who are controlled by the Spirit.

82-3 EPHESIAN. CHURCH. AGE - CHURCH. AGE. BOOK CPT. 3

No matter how just and upright a Christian is before the public, and how gracious he is to his fellow man, doing naught but good,

let him confess Christ as his Saviour and acknowledge the operation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in tongues, prophecy, healing and miracles, and he will be condemned.

The spirit of this world hates the Spirit of God, and because it can't overcome the Spirit of the Lord it tries to destroy the vessel in whom the Spirit of Truth dwells.

82-4 EPHESIAN. CHURCH. AGE - CHURCH. AGE. BOOK CPT. 3

Persecution and trials are a natural, normal part of the Christian life. There is only one thing you can do about them. Commit them all to God, judge not, and leave their outworking and final judgment to Him.

ACTS 20:2

2 And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece,

ACTS 20:3

3 And there abode three months. And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia.

ACTS 20:4

4 And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus.