

Dr. Craig Keener, Acts, Lecture 20, Acts 18-20

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This is Dr. Craig Keener in his teaching on the book of Acts. This is session 20 on Acts chapters 18 through 20.

Remember that Paul split the synagogue in Corinth as he's also going to split the synagogue in Ephesus in the next chapter.

That means that the community was divided. Some people believed him and some people didn't. But the ones who didn't, eventually realized there was no other way to get rid of him.

So, they brought him before Gallio, the new proconsul of Achaia, and they charged him with doing things and speaking contrary to the law. Now, technically, it was their view that he was doing it contrary to their law. They may have worded it ambiguously to make it sound like it was against Roman law.

But in any case, they may have wanted him to be dissociated from the Jewish community if it was just against their law. If Christianity, if the Christian movement, if it could be argued that it wasn't Jewish, then it would no longer have the same kind of protection under Roman law. Judaism wasn't technically what some people have called a *religio licita*.

That is, it wasn't technically what you call a legal religion. But because of its antiquity, it was considered a respectable, reputable religion. If the Christian movement were considered to be dissociated from it, it would be very difficult since it was entirely based on the same scriptures as Judaism was.

But if it could be argued that it was a different religion, then it could be seen as a new cult and therefore threatening to the stability of the Roman Empire. So you had in Thessalonica the charge of *maestas*, treason, and now it's a different kind of legal strategy. Paul claimed the Christian movement as the true Judaism, the true fulfillment of what the biblical prophets spoke about.

Galileo regarded it as a Jewish sect in contrast to the way it was being accused of being dissociated from Judaism and contrary to their law. And he said this is supposed to be an internal Jewish issue. Jewish people, like other groups of resident aliens in cities, were considered to be their own community where they could judge their own internal affairs.

But when it came to Roman law, that's when Romans would step in. So, he said, you have to see to this yourselves. This is not my affair.

So, in this case, it doesn't go like Pilate who was influenced in Luke chapter 23. Instead, this is a case where Roman law and Roman justice are actually followed as opposed to political issues. And that may be partly because the Jewish community didn't have that much political force in Corinth.

It may also be because Galileo didn't like the Jewish community and he certainly had precedent within Rome because of Claudius's expulsion. So, in 18:14, you know, Jews condemned by Jewish courts could always appeal to Rome. But in this case, Gallio's decision is that they were not simply, this was simply a Jewish issue.

This wasn't something that could be taken beyond that. Galileo's decision, unlike the local decision of the politarchs in Thessalonica or somewhere else, Galileo's decision wouldn't be merely local because he was the governor. And so this would set the highest precedent in Roman courts until the time of Nero.

And Nero was, after the time of Nero, Nero was not very well reputed, but unfortunately, he set some precedents that brought about persecution. Acts 18 verses 16 and 17. What happens to Paul's accusers? It looks like they get beaten instead of Paul.

Domitian punished Josephus' own accusers, Josephus' Jewish accusers. An emperor executed Samaritans who had brought charges against Jewish leaders. Greeks were notably anti-Jewish, and anti-Semitic, although less so than the Greeks in Alexandria, if you read about Flaccus and so on.

But there's another possibility. Maybe the Jewish community was exercising synagogue discipline against its own leader. Whatever the case, Sosthenes gets beaten, whether it's by an angry mob of Greeks that the governor simply ignores, or whether it's members of the synagogue community beating their own leader for getting them into it.

It's interesting though that the name of the leader, it's not a real common name, Sosthenes, turns up in one of Paul's letters as a co-sender of the letter to the Corinthians. And so, it suggests that he became a believer. He either was a believer already at this point or became one.

And Luke doesn't really explain exactly what the details are of what goes on here. Chapter 18, verse 24 through chapter 19 and verse 7. And here I'm going to be speeding up. Apollos is contrasted here with other followers of John.

Apollos is taught more fully the ways of Jesus. And then he goes from Ephesus to Corinth and publicly debates there and is a really good public debater, really good public speaker, as you also see from 1 Corinthians. Why doesn't Apollos get rebaptized after he's taught more about Jesus the way the other followers of John in 19:1 through 7 are rebaptized? Well, it's because they were Baptists and he was Anglican.

No, I'm just joking. It's because in 18:25, well, this is what I think. In 18:25, he was enthusiastic in the Spirit.

Could be translated and commentators are divided in this, which could mean that he was enthusiastic in his own spirit. But given Luke's normal usage and even given the slightly parallel usage in Romans chapter 12, I think it probably means that he was enthusiastic in the Spirit, in God's Spirit, the Holy Spirit. And so, he already had received the Spirit.

He may not have known much about Jesus, but he knew enough and he'd received the Spirit. In the case of these other followers of John, both had received John's baptism. They said in chapter 19:2, we've not even heard whether the Holy Spirit is.

That is, whether the Holy Spirit is available already. I mean, if they knew anything at all about Judaism, they knew that there was a Ruah HaQodesh, a Holy Spirit. And as John's disciples, they would have at least known John's prophecy about the coming baptism in the Holy Spirit.

But they apparently didn't know that the Spirit Baptizer had come. So, Paul explains that to them. In their case, they have not yet received the Spirit until Paul baptizes them, lays hands on them, and then they receive the Spirit.

John's baptism counted retroactively for Apollos because he already had the Spirit. So, he didn't need to be rebaptized, but they didn't. And so, they had to go from John's baptism to more specifically Christian baptism.

And then as they were filled with the Spirit, and again, there were plenty of places of water in Ephesus, but they were filled with the Spirit. And Paul laid hands on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. Again, this emphasis on Spirit-inspired, Spirit-empowered speaking, that they would now be welcome to join in the mission even so quickly after.

Now, there's a division of thought. Some people think that these disciples who just knew John's baptism were Christian disciples, and some think that they were just John's disciples. And it's divided.

I think the slight majority of us think that they were John's disciples and they hadn't been converted yet. But that is another issue of debate. So, I'm speeding up for the rest of Acts and moving further into Acts 19.

Verse 9, the school of Tyrannus. Some people think that the schola here could be a guild hall named for its patron. It's a possibility, but most scholars think, I think, including the scholar who originally proposed that most scholars think that it was a lecture hall.

And the lecture hall was named for Tyrannus. Tyrannus may have been the owner, the landlord, or he could have been the lecturer. And Tyrannus is probably a nickname.

It does appear a few other times in Ephesus, but it's probably a nickname, probably meaning this guy was a real tyrant. If he was a lecturer, he was like one of those teachers that you better work hard if you're going to take that professor, right? So anyway, probably given the normal ways of doing things in Ionia, which included Ephesus, probably he was done with the hall or whoever was using it was done before 11 a.m. That's when public life in Ionian cities ended. Paul probably did his manual labor until 11 a.m. and then had use of the school in the afternoons and so on.

People would normally break around noon for rest, sleeping, just a little nap, eating, or sometimes both. That's why in Acts 26, when you see Paul was traveling at noon, means he considered his mission quite urgent. Well, Paul here is a model of a spirit-filled teacher.

He teaches. He uses the venues for teaching that were already available in his culture. He speaks as a lecturer, as something like a Christian philosopher, because people came and listened to philosophers.

So, he would have his own students, and then other people could come in and listen if they wanted, and they probably did. And this was impacting the whole region. It was impacting Ephesus directly, but also some people were going out from Ephesus.

The Word of the Lord was spreading throughout that region, through all of the Roman province of Asia, which was one of the wealthiest provinces in the Roman Empire. Ephesus was the most prominent city in Asia Minor, in the Roman province of Asia. And so, we read that also miracles were taking place through him.

It was teaching. It was also a ministry of miracles. And here it seems to come up to the same level that you had in Acts 5. Because of this, because of the miracles taking place and the exorcisms taking place, some Jewish exorcists decide, well, let's imitate him.

Let's do what he did. Jewish exorcism techniques were often used like a stinky root or some sort of really foul odor to gag the demon out, and get the demon to flee. You have that in Tobit.

You also have it attested in Josephus, Antiquities 8, I believe. Also, Jewish exorcism techniques used name invocation. So, for example, someone in Antiquities 8 uses Solomon's magic ring and is casting out spirits supposedly in the name of Solomon.

Early Christians, would cast out spirits in the name of Jesus. But what that meant was they were authorized by Jesus. Somebody who's not really authorized by Jesus doesn't really have that authority, doesn't really have the ability to use that name.

Paul was a disciple of Jesus. I'm not one of the original disciples. I'm using disciple in the sense that it's used in Acts for the movement of Jesus' followers.

But the seven sons of Sceva were not. Sceva was a Latin name. And he's said to be a Jewish chief priest.

Josephus used the high priests or the chief priests, archiarius in the plural. But the question arises here, whether this person was generally from an aristocratic priestly family, or he was just said to be that. It was just a claim that he made to recruit more people to make use of his followers or maybe they were his literal sons.

It could be understood either way. But it does make you think of Luke chapter 11, where Jesus says, by whom do your own sons cast them out? And in that case, Jesus says, I'm not casting them out by Beelzebul. In this narrative, their sons don't prove able to cast them out.

In fact, the irony of it is that it's not the demon that gets cast out. It's the exorcists who get chased out. In any case, syncretism was common in Jewish magic where it blended together traditional magic and attempts to use the supreme name of the supreme God.

Some other people tried to do that too, thinking they could learn from Jewish magical practices. Again, this is not the majority of Jewish people, but just a minority who were practicing magic, but they were among the most highly praised in antiquity. Well, we've come across this a few times in Acts.

I mean, you've come across Simon the Sorcerer, Acts chapter 8, in Samaria, not Jewish, but kind of close to that. We've come across Elymas bar Jesus in Acts chapter 13. And now we have these Jewish exorcists who also are doing things that mainstream Judaism, at least in Judea and Galilee, would not have approved of.

And the point seems to be, look, you want to complain about us followers of Jesus who are miracle workers. Why don't you complain about these people? Because we are actually following scripture. We're not following these kinds of practices.

But in any case, and exorcisms continued to be common. Exorcisms in the name of Jesus by Jesus' followers were so effective, however, compared to other attempts at exorcisms, that as late as the fourth century, that was the leading cause of conversion to Christianity, was exorcisms and healings. Now, this use of a name to cast out demons, they're trying to use Jesus' name to cast out these spirits, and they're not successful because the demon speaks to the man and says, I know Jesus.

I've heard of Paul, but who are you? In other words, you're not authorized to use this name. And he could tell. And he jumped on them and apparently ripped the clothes off a couple of them so that they were stripped shamefully naked and they fled.

You may also remember what Jesus said about how he's casting demons out and this generation is like inviting them back in sevenfold more. So, he chases them out. And word spread in the name of the Lord Jesus was glorified because people realized that the name of the Lord Jesus was not like the name of a higher spirit to control a lower spirit.

The name of the Lord Jesus was not some magical formula. The name of the Lord Jesus was authorization for his true followers. And that may be why when Paul later writes to Ephesus, there's division among scholars, but I'm among those who think that Paul wrote the letter to the Ephesians.

In Ephesians chapter one, he's writing to people. It probably wasn't just Ephesus alone, but to the area around Ephesus included, but certainly Ephesus was one of the cities that was particularly addressed within the context of the Roman province of Asia. He's addressing people who've come from often an occult background.

They're afraid of these spiritual powers. And Paul reminds them that Christ has been exalted above every principality and power, every rule and authority, he says, and every name that is named, every name that is invoked, the name of Jesus is higher. And that's why he can go on to say that we have been enthroned with Christ in heavenly places that are far above these powers.

We have nothing to fear from these spiritual powers. Well, as a result of this, many people brought together their magic books that they were using to try to manipulate spirits and so on. And it says that they confessed their practices.

Well, some scholars have noted, that even though the wording doesn't have to mean this, probably includes divulging their spells because the wording certainly could

include that in ancient sources. Divulging spells, deprived magical spells of their power. That was at least the belief.

So, they come together with their magical books and they burn them. Well, burning books was often used in antiquity to repudiate their contents. So, this is a way of the people saying, we don't want to have anything to do with this anymore.

We're following the true way. So, Paul's impact on Ephesus was massive. It was impacting the entire community.

The amount of the books that were burned, publicly burned, the amount was 50,000 drachmas worth or about 50,000 days wages for an average agrarian worker. That was a lot of magical books being burned. And it probably made a big public scene.

Some people argue that it's not actually books, but it's Ephesia Gramata. These were magical papyri spells or counterspells rolled up in small cylinders or lockets worn around the neck or elsewhere as amulets. Ephesia Gramata, the term has often been associated by many scholars with magical formulas that could be used this way.

So, whether they're little pieces of papyrus or magical papyri or whether they are something a bit larger, either way, the people are repudiating the contents of this. But the big conflict ends up coming with local religion. In this case, not so much from the priest to the local religion, but for economic reasons, because it's cutting into people's business.

Artemis of Ephesus, verses 24 through 27. Some have suggested, because of the bulbous appendages on her breasts and the statues, that Artemis of Ephesus was a fertility goddess. Some contrast her with the chaste Greek Artemis of Ephesus.

They've suggested that the bulbous appendages mean that she's got lots and lots of breasts or that they are some sort of fertility eggs or something signifying fertility. However, there's also a statue of Zeus with something like this, which suggests that it may not have been that. I like the joke that maybe she just needed a dermatologist.

But in any case, in literary sources, she's still the virgin huntress. She's not a fertility goddess at all. And all the sources we have that could possibly interpret the artwork from antiquity suggest that no, she's not the mother goddess of the interior of Anatolia.

She's just Artemis, basically the Greek Artemis, but in a famous way at Ephesus. In verse 35, the city clerk speaks of Artemis's statue as a statue that fell from heaven. So, some have suggested maybe it's a meteorite.

But there are a lot of statues that were said to have fallen from heaven in antiquity, and those were not meteorites. Many of these supposed statues from heaven, were just carved by people. So, this one may have been the same as well.

And plus, it's interesting that in Ephesus, although there are many statues that were said to have fallen from heaven, we don't read about this anywhere else. So the city clerk is saying, seeing that these things are undeniable, and Luke's audience is laughing, ha ha, these things are very deniable. But in any case, her statue was well known.

There were a lot of miniature statues that were made to imitate the big statues. Her temple was among the seven wonders of the ancient world. It wasn't as big as the Jerusalem temple, but there was a lot of anti-Jewish prejudice because they believed in only one God.

So, this one made the seven wonders and the Jerusalem temple didn't. It's often been calculated, depending on what you calculate in it, the entire base or the temple proper, but it's often been calculated at 420 feet by 230 feet. That's 130 meters by 70 meters.

It's about four times as large as Athens' famous temple for Athena, the Parthenon. So, this is a huge temple. It wasn't in the city proper.

There was a route you could take, a sacred route out to the side of the temple, about one and a half miles or 2.4 kilometers northeast of the city. They had a special month dedicated to Artemis, and special festivals dedicated to Artemis, including her birth, supposed birth date, and so forth. And this is Artemis of Ephesus, whom all of Asia and the world worships, 19:27.

Well, even though Artemis, the Greek Artemis, was worshipped all over the place, the specifically Ephesian version of Artemis actually was worshiped around the world as well. There are over 30 places in the known world, places that we know about, where specifically the Ephesian Artemis was worshipped and not just Artemis in general. Missionaries spread the cult.

Now often these were merchants and they just got dreams or something from Artemis and they would go and spread that. But Jews around the Roman Empire knew about Artemis of Ephesus. This was a well-known deity.

But what really provokes the riot involves economics, and economic issues. Demetrius here calls together his fellow craftsmen. He's portrayed as a demagogue by Luke.

Demagogues in ancient literature were very poorly looked upon, especially in the Roman Empire, when people who stirred up mobs, people who stirred up riots could be prosecuted for sedition. Demetrius here speaks like a demagogue. The rhetoric of his speech is very populist, which was very looked down upon by orators in antiquity.

But he was a maker of silver shrines. Now many of the shrines that archaeologists have found are terracotta, souvenir shrines of Artemis. That is, they were modeled after the real shrine of Artemis as a kind of souvenir that tourists could take with them, and pilgrims could take with them.

But silver was more prestigious. So, among the makers of shrines, he is among the elite makers of shrines. But he's still a worker.

He may be a silver worker, which was among the most respected classes of artisans, but he's still an artisan. So, he's not part of the elite per se. When he speaks of similar trades, it may have been others involved in making shrines.

It may have been others involved in making, it may have been others who were metalsmiths. We have a lot of gold and silver statuettes of Artemis from antiquity. Besides having shrines, we also have statuettes of 1.4 to 3.2 kilograms.

Well, economic issues could cause a lot of instability. Even in Rome, where they imported massive amounts of grain children in Egypt, where a lot of the grain was raised, often went hungry. Even in Rome, where they tried to keep everybody happy and keep things stable, especially in the heart of the empire, there were sometimes grain riots.

Well, here, economics is involved. Their livelihood is involved in making these silver shrines. And we also know of other examples of trouble in Ephesus due to economic troubles at this time.

There actually were some people who misappropriated some funds from the Temple of Artemis, which owned massive estates. And this became a major scandal just a few years before the events narrated here. So, everything fits pretty well with what we have here.

And it fits what we know of antiquity. It fits what we know of some other parts of the world. Acts chapter 16, remember why were Paul and Silas arrested and beaten? Because they messed with the economics of somebody who was speaking by the spirit of the Pythonists.

They messed with the economics of pagan religion. And that's true here. It's happened in various other places.

It happened one time I used to work in a street mission where we worked with people on the street and helped people on the street and fed them and so on. And one area where we were, there was a place that dealt a lot with sexual practices that are forbidden in the Bible. And they were complaining that we were too close to them and therefore interfering with their clientele and their business.

And so, because of their economic influence and because we were helping people for free, we were forced to relocate to another location in the city. So, things like this happen. Well, the people were very loyal to Artemis of Ephesus.

I mean, this was part of their civic loyalty. Civic loyalty was a big thing back then. It was like nationalism.

And riots would spread easily when you touched on something like patriotism. Especially given the close-knit and public structure of ancient urban society, word traveled quickly. Trade guilds were one place they could travel quickly.

And the crowd ends up in the theater. Now, there are two places that have been suggested based on the remains that have been found of where Demetrius may have been or where the guild that he was addressing may have been. One is on Arcadius Street or what later became known as Arcadius Street, which is the street that runs directly from the harbor to the theater.

The other is a bit closer to the market, which is also right beside the theater. In any case, they didn't have far to go while they were stirred up. The marketplace was right by the theater.

It would be full of people. So, you go into the marketplace and you start shouting these things, you can stir up a riot very quickly. And the theater, they could go into very quickly.

The theater was massive. You could see it from the harbor. In fact, you can still see it from where the harbor was.

You can still see it from there today. It had a seating capacity of over 20,000. Sometimes we've said 25,000, but that actually was after some expansion later in the first century.

So, at this point, it may have just been not 25,000 yet, but over 20,000, which suggests that the population of Ephesus may have been somewhere around 200,000 at this point. But it was right by a crowded market. The theater was used for civic assemblies, regular civic assemblies that met at regular times, and sometimes irregular civic assemblies where somebody could just call a meeting.

And it appears that some of the people are rushing into the theater of Ephesus. We know a lot about Ephesus from the Ephesian inscriptions, which have been published in a great number of volumes of Ephesian inscriptions. But apparently some of the people running into the theater think it's an irregular assembly that's been called to deal with an issue.

They have no idea. It's just a mob. They don't know what's going on.

Just like in Acts chapter 21 during the riot, you have different opinions of what's going on. That's sometimes what happens when you have a riot. Some people are there and they have a misunderstanding of the real issues behind it.

The Asiarchs in verse 31, Paul's disciples didn't want him to go into the theater and especially the Asiarchs didn't want him to go in. Demetrius hadn't been able to find Paul, but they had seized a couple of Paul's companions and dragged them into the theater to accuse them. The Asiarchs were, many of them were priests of the imperial cult in Asia.

Not that Asiarchs automatically were that, but they were taken from the same group, the same elite people often who made major donations and so on. The emperor cult was a major issue in Ephesus. It had been a major issue since Augustus.

They got the first imperial temple in Asia Minor there in Ephesus. Well, why were these Asiarchs Paul's friends? Friends could mean different things in antiquity. You had friends who were peers.

Normally the Greek ideal of that was you shared confidences. You might even lay down your life for one another or be willing to die with one another. You shared all things in common.

That was the Greek ideal. But it also came to be a euphemism, particularly in Roman culture, but also in Greek culture, for patrons and clients, for benefactors in the Greek world and their dependents. Well, the Asiarchs, part of the way that they got honor and inscriptions would be dedicated to them was their donation to public works.

But they also could be what we sometimes today call patrons of the arts or patrons of education. They sponsored things for the public good. Well, here's Paul.

He's a popular teacher. What better way to get honor for yourself than to help sponsor this popular teacher who's very well-liked. He has a great reputation.

Miracles are taking place. Hey, we're in it and we get the honor by sponsoring him. Well, what happens if suddenly there's a scandal about him? You don't want to be associated with him.

Or if you know that it's a false scandal, at the very least, you want to work behind the scenes. You want it to be as least associated with Paul as possible. So, you know this riot going on.

You say, okay, we'll handle this behind the scenes. Paul, please don't go in there. Now, we know that Paul liked to go preach even in the case of danger.

In Acts chapter 21, there's a riot in the temple. The Romans take him out and he wants to speak to the people, even though it restarts the riot. Here, he doesn't because here, well, you know, these Asiarchs have laid themselves on the line for him.

He does owe them something in terms of the social structure. And so, to prevent embarrassment for them, probably, he doesn't go in when the Asiarchs request him in verse 31 not to go in. But think about this.

Here were people who were leaders in pagan society. Undoubtedly, they weren't Christians. Well, perhaps one or two of them became Christians, although you'd think that Luke would like to mention that if he knew it as he did with Sergius Paulus.

But you think of how Paul related to people. Paul preached monotheism. That's what he's denounced for by Demetrius, that he's preaching against Artemis of Ephesus.

Well, apparently, he wasn't preaching against any god in particular. He was just preaching that there was one true god and therefore, you shouldn't follow other ones. But he wasn't speaking particularly against Artemis of Ephesus.

But in any case, for a monotheist, you know, he's doing a good job of relating to people who don't agree with him. And that's a good model for us in societies that aren't completely Christian, which means virtually every society because no society is everybody really following Jesus. He gives us a model here not for being a separatist, but for integrating with the culture and reaching the culture.

Now, what you have in Revelation is a bit different. What you have in John 15:18 through 25, talking about the world hating you, is a bit different because they're addressing a different kind of social situation. When you're in persecution, when you're being persecuted, well, the lines are more clearly drawn.

And we see this with Jesus, too. I mean, Jesus is willing to eat with tax collectors and sinners. But what is he doing when he's eating with tax collectors and sinners? Well, whenever we hear what he's doing, it says they were hearing him gladly.

He was sharing the good news of the kingdom with them. So, we're not friends with the world so we can absorb the world's values like sexual immorality, materialism instead of caring for the poor, or things like that. We are there to bring hope and light and truth and peace, good things to the world.

We're there to be an influence of good for the world, not to be influenced by the bad things in the world, and not to say that everything in the world is bad. But we see different approaches in different parts of the New Testament. Sometimes people favor only one or the other, and we need to be sensitive to what the times are, and what they call for.

This was a wonderful opportunity for Paul to minister, but this opportunity is quickly coming to an end. Well, the city clerk gets up and addresses the people who have come into the theater and are chanting a chant that was often used for ancient deities. They were just saying, Great is Artemis of Ephesus, and repeating that over and over.

Well, those kinds of chants we know of from antiquity. It was a way of hailing the goddess. And the city clerk comes in.

Luke tells us that most of the people there didn't even know what the riot was about. They didn't know it had anything to do with Paul. The city clerk comes in.

He's the grammetus, which in many places had just been a scribe, could even mean somebody who helped people with their legal documents. But in Ephesus, that was the title of the chief official. So, this is the chief official of Ephesus.

And the crowd quiets down some when he comes onto the platform in the theater. The theater, by the way, had statues of Artemis and other things around. It was a pagan venue like Ephesus as a whole was.

And they quiet down when they see him. If this is an irregular meeting of the assembly, well, then he is the one in charge. And so, it's good they quieted down because otherwise, they wouldn't have heard anything he said.

Well, how could they hear him anyway? Well, normally in a theater, you could hear people. It was built for acoustics. They didn't have microphones.

But if people quieted down, they should be able to hear him. He would be able to project his voice. Now he speaks.

And how did he find out about this? How does he know that Demetrius stirred the riot? Well, probably the Asiarchs, who are Paul's patrons, got word to their peer, this city official, behind the scenes so he could quiet down the crowds. And he clearly condemns Demetrius as a demagogue. Now in an honor and shame society, that means Demetrius would probably want to lash back.

But the city clerk said, if this needs to be dealt with, it needs to be dealt with in the courts. So that may be why Paul doesn't end up in town later on. But anyway, he speaks of lawful assemblies in verses 39 and 40.

These things need to be dealt with in a lawful assembly. He says the courts are open. The governors are here.

This may have been at one time, shortly after the assassination of the governor, when there were two people who were functioning in his place. But in any case, Ephesus was a free city, just like we said about Athens and Thessalonica. It wasn't a colony, but it was a free city with its own senate and assembly.

But this was completely dependent on Roman goodwill. Conflicts within a city sometimes led to Roman intervention. After all, the proconsul, or possibly during this period, proconsuls, their headquarters were in the city of Ephesus.

So, you really didn't want to mess up because the city could lose privileges. And sometimes some of the Hellenized cities of Asia Minor lost privileges because of riots. Well, Luke, I love the way Luke narrates things.

He's upbeat. He's positive. But he's kind of like Josephus on the anti-Jewish riots.

When there were riots against Jews, Josephus reports the precedents, the legal precedents that said, okay, well, the Jews, this wasn't their fault. These are their rights. They've been asserted by those in authority.

And Josephus is always eager to show the Jewish community did not start the riots. Now, Luke is always at pains to show that Paul is not the one who started the riots. And given what we know of Paul, that makes sense.

The Paul who wrote the letters of Paul would not have started riots. Having said that, Luke needs to show this because what's one of the major charges against Paul, initial charges against Paul in Acts 24 and verse 5? Well, he goes around starting riots. Therefore, he can be charged with sedition, which is a capital offense.

Now, if you look through the book of Acts, there are a number of riots where Paul goes. You have them in Acts chapter 13, and in Acts chapter 14, you have these mob

scenes. Who starts those riots? Well, it looks like it's often the Jewish community in the cities.

Acts chapter 19, it's not the Jewish community in Ephesus. Just like in Acts chapter 16, it's not the Jewish community there. Both in 16 and 19, it's because Paul's a monotheist.

That's why he gets accused from pagan sources. But in Ephesus, the Jewish community ends up getting blamed for it. Paul doesn't take the stage because he's been begged not to.

But somebody from the Jewish community does take the stage from the synagogue that Paul split because a lot of the synagogue went with Paul as Jewish believers in Jesus. And the rest of the synagogue that stayed behind, they put forward Alexander, who's a member of the synagogue, to try to dissociate themselves from Paul. Even though Paul is accused of preaching monotheism and preaching against Artemis, they don't want to be associated with this.

They don't want to rock the boat. This is their community. But once the crowd realizes that he's a Jew, they cry out, all the more, great is Artemis of the Ephesians.

And so, the local Jewish community ends up getting blamed for it, even though they didn't start this riot. So, it's not surprising in Acts chapter 21 that it's going to be Jews from Ephesus, from the synagogue, who are going to accuse Paul of having taken an Ephesian Gentile, Trophimus, into the temple with him. And they start a riot there.

But again, Paul didn't start that riot. So, it's important to see this and to see why Luke is developing this the way he is. As I argued at the beginning, this would be true material, but Luke doesn't have to include everything.

We've seen that he leaves out a whole lot. So, there's a reason for this emphasis. The city clerk humiliates Demetrius, but the Asiarchs were likely embarrassed, which may be one of the reasons that Paul circumvents Ephesus in Acts chapter 20 and verse 16.

Many commentators, Ben Witherington, myself, and others have often argued this. Partly it's for the reason that Luke explicitly gives it to save time. Well, how will that save Paul time to circumvent Ephesus when he has to wait for the elders to come from Ephesus to Miletus, where he goes? Part of it may depend on where his ship was going to be traveling, but most likely it was to save time due to hospitality obligations.

If you go to a city where you've been for a long time, you know, everybody's going to want to visit you. Everybody's going to want you to visit. People may be offended if you don't visit them.

So, in cultures that don't have that, we may not be as familiar with that. But cultures that are familiar with hospitality obligations may understand a bit more of that. People actually get offended if you're in town and you don't stop to visit them.

And we have that in ancient letters where people said, oh, I heard you came within 30 miles and you didn't visit me. I'm hurt. But a reason that may be an additional factor that Luke doesn't mention is that Paul was not as welcome and it probably would have done more harm for the church than good for Paul to show up in Ephesus.

You know, it's not like the Asiarchs didn't like him, but it was better for everybody if things lay low. So, Paul doesn't come personally there at this point. Although what he is going to say in his message is, you won't see my face again.

Acts chapter 20, we have in the first few verses, we have Paul traveling to Achaia again, wintering with them. And the letter to the Romans was written from there and so forth. But also, we come to the narrative of Eutychus when they get to Philippi, the wee picks up again.

So, Luke rejoins them after many years and then they travel for six days. They don't have the favorable winds they did for the two-day voyage before they travel across from Philippi's port city of Neapolis to Troas. And he's there in Troas speaking to the believers and they have what is apparently a Sunday evening meeting.

There's some dispute whether it's Saturday evening or Sunday evening. I think all the evidence together probably fits a Sunday evening meeting that lasts all night long. Well, is this a precedent for holding all-night Sunday meetings? Probably not.

Probably the reason they held this Sunday meeting all night long is because, like the text says, Paul was leaving the next day. So, if he's going to catch up with them about stuff, he's got to pull an all-nighter and they're going to have to pull an all-nighter to hear his message. Well, like Jesus said, the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

So, this is where Eutychus falls asleep. It was considered a bad thing for students to fall asleep on their teachers. Sometimes teachers actually literally threw their books at the students to wake them up.

We have reports of that from antiquity. But he goes in the window. Now windows were often fairly large.

It's not like squeezing yourself under a little window. It was often fairly large, especially windows higher up on the wall. I did some study on ancient architecture, looking through a lot of sources to look at what these windows were like.

Usually, well, very few windows had glass in them in this period. Glass did exist, but it wasn't normally used for windows. So, it was very rare in windows at this period.

People sometimes would have wooden shutters or drapes or something, which they'd open at certain times of the year and close at certain times of the year. But this was a large window, most likely. Why is he sitting in the window and why is he falling asleep? That's sometimes connected with the question, why does Luke mention lampstands? Well, some say that maybe the lampstands are to show that this was not a subversive meeting because they actually had light.

They weren't meeting in the dark. Some say the smell of the oil or the warmth of the oil would put him to sleep. And friends of mine who smell oil a lot say it doesn't have that effect on them.

But then one said, yes, it does have that effect on me. So, I don't know. But in any case, the smell of the oil or the warmth may have made a window seat desirable to get away from that.

Although at this time of year, I don't trust, the weather could have been so-so. But maybe the point is simply that he fell asleep despite the fact that lighting was available. In any case, he falls out the window and Paul goes down and raises him in some language that's reminiscent, you know, falling on him, reminiscent of Elijah and Elisha, raising people.

Now this one is in WE material. So, we have a raising here where Luke himself is a witness. The young man is taken up alive.

It doesn't indicate that there was nothing wrong with him. It doesn't indicate that he wasn't like a little dizzy or something. But in any case, he's alive and well, which they didn't think he was going to be, especially the way he landed.

We do have other reports in antiquity of people falling off things and breaking their necks and so on. And then what does Paul do? Does he say, well, he fell asleep during my preaching. It must be boring. Everybody go home.

No, he finishes. He goes all night and then they eat together again and break bread together again.

And his travels are very interesting. And I'm not mentioning all the places in chapter 20 where he traveled, even though I deal with them more in my commentary. I'll mention a few of them in chapter 21.

But Paul gives a farewell speech at the latest. Farewell speeches were actually a category of speeches in antiquity. In fact, in Jewish literature, they were often testaments when somebody was about to die.

But in ancient literature in general, you had often farewell speeches. In these verses, 18 through 35, Paul is addressing the elders of Ephesus who've had to gather very quickly, drop everything, and come meet him in Miletus. And there are many parallels with Paul's letters, even in wording.

In fact, there was an entire monograph on this by Steve Walton. There are many other works that mention these. Steve Walton was just mentioning parallels with 1 and 2 Thessalonians, which were among Paul's, well, 1 Thessalonians, probably Paul's earliest letter, if not his earliest, his second earliest.

And others have noted parallels with other Pauline letters, very many parallels. We read about Paul is addressing the elders in the Old Testament. He speaks of them as overseers and how God has made them shepherds.

We have the same linkage among these terms in Titus chapter 1, and especially including the shepherds in 1 Peter chapter 5. So, in the first century, it appears that church elders were also overseers, episkopoi, which is a language that later becomes used by the time you get to Ignatius, it's used for what we call bishops. So that did evolve very quickly, but in this period, these were still overseers, probably local churches. They could have multiple ones per local church even if we're reading some of the other texts correctly.

And they were also shepherds, they were pastors. Pastor is just Latin for shepherd, poimein in Greek. In the Old Testament, the leaders of God's people were often called shepherds.

Shepherd had been a frequent metaphor for leaders, even for kings going back I think as far as Sumerian literature. It's all over the place in Homer, Agamemnon, the shepherd of his people as a king of the Achaeans. So, in any case, these are the people who are responsible.

And in Jesus' teaching, these are not people who are to lord it over the flock. These are people who are to serve the flock and they have to watch out for the flock. And Paul presented himself as an example for them, which moralists and philosophers often did.

He says in verse 26 after he talks about day and night ministering to people from house to house as well as in the larger assemblies, he says in verse 26, I'm innocent of the blood of all people. Well, that sounds like Ezekiel 33 verses 8 and 9, also Ezekiel 3, but Ezekiel 33. And then he goes on to talk about shepherds in verse 28,

maybe evoking Ezekiel 34, which suggests that even though Luke doesn't spell out all the connections, Luke doesn't go into detail.

Luke is remembering a real speech that Paul gave and Paul is actually expounding some scripture from Ezekiel. Also in verse 29, you know, your shepherds, you need to watch out because from your own number wolves will arise. Well, back in Luke 10 and verse 3, Jesus warns that he is sending his disciples as lambs among wolves.

But here in Acts 20, verse 29, we see that wolves will come among them, will come among the lambs, among the sheep. False teaching became a very big issue in Ephesus as we see later and in a lot of other places as well. It's something we really need to watch out for.

Now we're not talking about people holding minor divergences on minor things. I mean, those things over time can grow and become worse. We want to be as accurate as possible.

We don't break fellowship over minor things. But when you have some serious false teaching, that needs to be addressed. And when people become like wolves, that is they start exploiting the sheep for their own interests, you have to watch out.

Paul has appointed elders or maybe, you know, in Ephesus they're mature enough now that they're appointing some of their own elders. But it can be very serious. We have to be careful.

And sometimes, I mean, there are people, friends of mine that I started with years ago who were serving the Lord. I mean, most of the ones who were serving the Lord then are still serving the Lord. But I have some very close friends in ministry who've fallen away.

And some of them are not hostile. I mean, they're still, I mean, they love Christians. They just, but then there are others who really went the wrong way.

And so, Paul warns against that. And we can't let the sheep be harmed by that. We have to protect the sheep.

The Holy Spirit testifies, it says, in every city that dangers away to him in Jerusalem. And he says that this is part of his example of sacrificial, being willing to suffer for God's people. He says, that even though the Holy Spirit testifies this in every city, I'm determined to go there because I'm going to fulfill my calling no matter what.

Paul was driven by his calling. You know, when it burns inside of you, you're going to do it and nothing is going to stop you. You don't want to run over people with it.

Remember Paul and Barnabas. But Paul is going to fulfill his calling. Nothing's going to stop him, including death itself.

So, what does this mean? The Holy Spirit testifies to him in every city. Well, probably the spirit of prophecy. We get examples of that after this when he goes to Tyre and also when he stops in Caesarea, he's receiving prophecies like this.

In Tyre, the prophecy, just says they said to him through the spirit that he shouldn't go. And in verse 11 in Caesarea, it's very explicit what's going to happen to him, which is probably the substance of what happened in Tyre as well. In any case, there's a lot of pathos.

There were a few people who didn't believe you should use pathos in speaking, but most orators did accept it. And I mean, some things do generate emotion, pathos, and often sympathy. This was often used by a defendant in speaking and it was used in other ways as well.

But Paul says I exhorted you with tears. And by the time he's done, the people are crying because they know that they may never see his face again. And their affection for Paul communicates something that Luke couldn't just communicate by saying, you know, Paul's a great guy.

Everybody ought to like Paul. Well, you can see how much people did love Paul. Sometimes, depending on their own background, we may take certain things in Paul's letters where he has to be firm and miss other things.

Paul's letters are full of pastoral concern and love. And yes, sometimes he's firm, but so much of that firmness is caused by love, by caring for the people. First Thessalonians, we would have given our own lives for you.

Like a nursing mother cares for her children, just so much of that. And Paul was that kind of person, driven by his calling, but a people person. I don't know if he was an extrovert or an introvert.

He probably was an extrovert. I guess I don't like to know because I'm an introvert. But I think the Apostle John was probably an introvert.

So, we're all right. Peter was definitely an introvert. But Paul was loved by people.

Some people disagreed with him. Some people didn't like him. But the people who really knew him, you see them weeping.

You see them kissing him. Now, keep in mind the way kissing was done back then. Different cultures do it differently.

You might have a kiss on the lips in some traditional Russian culture, and kisses on the cheeks in traditional French culture. In my culture, that's considered poor hygiene. Don't even get near my space bubble.

But we can hug people that we like. But in any case, different cultures do it differently. But in ancient Mediterranean culture, family members and close friends or a student and a teacher, a teacher and a student would often greet with a kiss.

You might greet a very respectable person or your patron. You might kiss them on the hands. But usually, the kiss was a light kiss on the lips, not a passionate kiss.

That was reserved for lovers. But just a light kiss on the lips. A teacher could give a student a kiss on the forehead or something.

But usually, family members are lightly kissed on the lips. And that's probably what was going on here as they saw Paul off. Well, in the next session, we'll turn into chapter 21 and we'll learn about some of Paul's travels, some of the prophecies, and when Paul is about to get in trouble again.

And this one will not be resolved quite so quickly.

This is Dr. Craig Keener in his teaching on the book of Acts. This is session 20 on Acts chapters 18 through 20.