

The Attackers: Black Sheep: Demetrius: Alexander Takes the Rostrum & Is Shouted Down by the Mob, Acts 19:33–34; This Alexander Is the Same Man that Is Called Alexander Coppersmith in 2 Tim 4:14; Rallying Cries Are Designed to Influence Converts: Examples from Vietnam War to Present; Lennon’s “Imagine”; the Mayor of Ephesus Takes the Stage, Calms the Mob, Reminds Rioters of Roman Law, & Guides Them to Legal Recourse, vv. 35–38

Acts 19:33 - Some of the crowd concluded it was Alexander [Ἀλέξανδρος (*Aléxandros*): defender of men], since the Jews had put him forward; and having motioned with his hand, Alexander was intending to make a defense to the assembly.

1. This verse seems to be out of place in the narrative. Suddenly, the Jews are shown to be pushing a man named Alexander upon the rostrum, but for what purpose?
2. It is indicated that he intended to “make a defense to the riotous mob.” Why would the Jews need to make a defense?
3. The Jewish population of Ephesus, although not rigid adherents to the Mosaic Law, remained in opposition to idol worship.
4. It was no secret that the Jews were opposed to the making and veneration of idolatrous bric-a-bras so the mob had no interest in a Jewish mea culpa; they were after the blood of a Jewish Christian.
5. The effort to put a man on the rostrum to explain that the Jews were not associated with Paul or his Christian followers turned out to be a nonstarter.
6. We have uncovered the identity of the Asiarchs. Now we encounter Alexander, a name that is used in five contexts in the New Testament:
 - (1) In Mark 15:21, Alexander is identified as the father of Simon of Cyrene, the man who carried the Lord’s cross.
 - (2) The Alexander in Acts 4:6 is a relative of Annas, the Jewish high priest, and in this context is a member of the Sanhedrin.
 - (3) The Alexander in Acts 19:33 is a Jew selected to appease the mob into not blaming the Jews for Paul’s preaching in Ephesus.
 - (4) Paul makes reference to Hymenaeus and Alexander as men he has “handed over to Satan, so they will be taught not to blaspheme” (1 Timothy 1:20).
 - (5) Paul expresses having trouble with Alexander the coppersmith who “did me much harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds” (2 Timothy 4:14).
7. There is no question that Alexanders #4 and #5 are the same man and it is most likely the case for #3. This excerpt provides details:

It is quite uncertain whether Alexander no. 5 should be identified with Alexander no. 4, and even with Alexander no. 3. In regard to this, it should be remembered that all three of these Alexanders were resident in Ephesus; and it is specially to be noticed that the fourth and fifth of that name resided in that city at much the same time; the interval between Paul’s references to these two being not more than a year or two, as not more than that time elapsed between his writing 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy. It is therefore quite possible these two Alexanders may be one and the same person.

In any case, what is said of this last Alexander is that he had shown the evil which was in him by doing many evil deeds to the apostle, evidently on the occasion of a recent visit paid by Paul to Ephesus. These evil deeds had taken the form of personally opposing the apostle's preaching. The personal antagonism of Alexander manifested itself by his greatly withstanding the proclamation of the gospel by Paul. As Timothy was now in Ephesus, in charge of the church there, he is strongly cautioned by the apostle to be on his guard against this opponent.¹

8. That the union and other participants were not interested in hearing Alexander #3's comments is revealed in the next verse:

Acts 19:34 - But when they recognized that he was a Jew, a single outcry arose from them all as they shouted for about two hours, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

1. All mobs are trained to chant bromides its handlers assume will attract more converts. Those that opposed the draft during the Vietnam War shouted, "Hell no, we won't go!" Simultaneously with this were the slogans of the civil rights movement, "We shall overcome," and the antiwar protesters' pacifist catchphrase, "Give peace a chance." The morally vacuous hippies revealed their sexual proclivities with their shouts of: "Make love, not war." The current Occupy Wall Street protesters have a few that clearly identify them as anarchists, socialists, and thieves: "Occupy All Streets," "People not Profits," and "Tax the Rich." One of the latter style was most blatant, "We Want Your Stuff: Local Union of Looters and Moochers," which suggests the intent to rob and pilfer.
2. All of these were ways of using a rhetorical veil to conceal while advancing the hidden agenda being advanced by the managers of each category.
3. The 1960s shifted the "long march through institutions" into high gear which is basically the intent behind virtually all protest movements.
4. If ever a lyric was written in hell it is John Lennon's doggerel ditty "Imagine." Few songs contain raw evil from its first to last note:

Imagine there's no heaven, it's easy if you try;
No hell below us, above us only sky.
Imagine all the people living for today.

Imagine there's no countries, it isn't hard to do;
Nothing to kill or die for, and no religion, too.
Imagine all the people living life in peace.

You may say I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one;
I hope someday you'll join us, and the world will live as one.

Imagine no possessions, I wonder if you can;
No need for greed or hunger or brotherhood of man.
Imagine all the people sharing all the world.

You may say I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one;
I hope someday you'll join us, and the world will live as one.

¹ John Rutherford, "Alexander," in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, gen. ed. James Orr (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956), 1:90-91.

5. Well, even Grace Doctrine Church has its slogan which appears on its Web site and stationary: Faith alone in Christ alone.
6. This was the message Paul was teaching in the school of Tyrannus. It was in stark opposition to the views held by the subjects of Artemis who, for two hours, shouted about her greatness down the street at the theater of Ephesus.

Acts 19:34 - But when the mob recognized Alexander was a Jew a single rallying cry arose from them all as they shouted for about two hours, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

7. What happens next is the arrival of a man with wisdom who will use common sense to quiet the crowd, relieve them of their fears, and disburse them back to their homes, businesses, or areas of entertainment.

Acts 19:35 - After quieting the crowd, the town clerk said, "Men of Ephesus, what man is there after all who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is guardian of the temple of the great Artemis and of the image which fell down from heaven?"

1. The name of the "town clerk" is not given. The title given to him in the Greek is **γραμματεὺς (grammateús)**. This word usually refers to the scribes, experts in their interpretation of the Mosaic Law and commentators regarding the oral law.
2. But this man is a Gentile and his duties were quite different from that of the Jewish scribes:

In Asia [town clerks] were officers of considerable consequence and the *grammateus* is not infrequently mentioned in the inscriptions and on the coins of Ephesus. They had the supervision of the city archives, all official decrees were drawn up by them, and it was their prerogative to read such decrees to the assembled citizens. Their social position was thus one of eminence.²

3. It is obvious this man is a politician. The first thing he does is confirm the lie in order to comfort the crowd. "Everybody knows Ephesus is the site of the temple of Artemis and we are the ones who are the keepers of her image." He then certifies the lie with the comment, "These facts are indisputable."
4. This reassurance enabled the mayor to lead the crowd back to reality – Roman reality. It was imperative that this riot be quelled since the men were about to violate Roman law.
5. The mayor is the most important resident official in Ephesus and thus held responsible for maintaining the peace. The mob is familiar with the fact that if a riot were to occur and a Roman citizen murdered without due recourse of law it would bring the wrath of Rome down upon the city.
6. In addition, those who perpetrated "anything reckless," as warned by the mayor, would fall under Roman justice.

Acts 19:36 - "So, since these are undeniable facts, you ought to keep calm and to do nothing rash.

v. 37 - "For you have brought these men here who are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of our goddess."

² Henry E. Dosker, "Town Clerk," in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, 4:3001.

7. The mayor was not aware of any crime committed by Paul or his associates and as examples he contends they have not robbed the temple of Artemis nor have they blasphemed the goddess.
8. The temple of Artemis was a bank where people all over the Roman world deposited money. The temple also lent money and received legacies and private donations.
9. The temple owned revenue-producing property, including herds of deer. It was an asylum for debtors and for the helpless.³
10. The mayor then identifies himself with Artemis in order to calm the crowd by calling the idol “our goddess.” The reference puts him in agreement with them that if Artemis were blasphemed he would be as upset as they.
11. This helped him emphasize the point that the men had not robbed the temple; they had not blasphemed, therefore to do anything to them was reckless in the sense that they would all fall under Roman scrutiny.
12. The following statements by the mayor introduce establishment common sense into the discussion and bring the mob back to reality.

Acts 19:38 - “So if [*ei*, *ei*: first class condition: assumption of truth for the sake of argument] Demetrius and the craftsmen who are with him, have a complaint against any man, the courts are in session and proconsuls are available; let them bring charges against one another there.”

³ James S. Jeffers, *The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament Era*, (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 269.