

The Attackers: Jesus Christ Controls History: Conclusion: a House Divided; Application: the Demise of the Worship of Artemis & the Rise of Christianity in Ephesus**VIII. Conclusion.**

1. This brief overview of the principle that Jesus Christ controls history helps us analyze and discern our current Zeitgeist which is indicative of an historical downtrend of epic proportions.
2. But whatever the present situation, it can be turned around by the believer and when enough positive volition is evident, the Lord controls history on behalf of it.
3. Jesus Christ controlled history in first-century Ephesus by means of the laws of divine establishment.
4. The mayor's presence at the theater and his ability to communicate legal principles to the potentially riotous throng is what restored order.
5. But how is it that the Lord can make unbelievers behave? Primarily through fear. Rome represented authority and Rome insisted that order be maintained in the provinces.
6. The mayor used these facts to disburse the crowd. Here was his approach:
 - 1) He appealed to the religious beliefs of the crowd: "Who is it that does not know that the city of the Ephesians is the keeper of the temple of the Great Artemis?" (Acts 19:35).
 - 2) He supported their belief that Artemis was the supreme goddess and this fact was alleged to be "indisputable" (Acts 19:36).
 - 3) He then indicated that the men they had brought into the theater – Gaius and Aristarchus – were neither robbers nor blasphemers yet identified himself with the Artemis worshippers by the use of the pronoun our: "our goddess" (Acts 19:37).
 - 4) The mayor then turns to a brief lecture on the laws of divine establishment as exercised by the Roman Empire. He advises Demetrius and his followers that if they have a legitimate complaint, the courts are in session and proconsuls are available and they may bring charges before them (Acts 19:38).
 - 5) If, however, their complaint is not covered by existing law, then they may appear before the town assembly in one of its three monthly meetings and express their grievances before that council.
 - 6) The key statement by the mayor is the one that wins the hour. He proclaims that the entire city is in danger of being accused of a riot without cause and thus they will be unable to account for themselves (Acts 19:40).
 - 7) The impact of this statement sends fear up the spines of the theater's entire gathering. What follows is an example of how Jesus Christ controls history through the function of the laws of divine establishment.
 - 8) If Rome should get word of an unlawful assembly accompanied by a riot, false accusations brought against Roman citizens without due process of law, and news that one of them may have been harmed or even killed, then the free status of Ephesus would be in extreme danger and the arrival of the Roman army a certainty.
 - 9) Order restored, the mayor dismisses the assembly (Acts 19:41).

7. The principles that we have studied regarding the Lord's control of history are applicable to every area of life: the world at large, individual nations, their cities and towns, their neighborhoods and their homes, and each individual in them.
8. These principles also apply the local churches where authority is divinely assigned to the pastor-teachers God appoints as shepherds over the various congregations that make up His flock.
9. When members of a congregation are not authority oriented they tend to unknowingly arrogate authority to themselves and make unilateral decisions that are not theirs to make.
10. Whether a mob in Ephesus or a clique in a congregation, when decisions are made outside the authority structure of any organization the result is disorder.
11. PRINCIPLE: "Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and any city or house divided against itself will not stand" – Jesus Christ, Matthew 12:25.
12. QUESTION: "Is Christ divided?" No! (1 Corinthians 1:13.)
13. No matter what the organization – a kingdom, a city, or a house – it cannot last if those within it are divided. With this in mind there are a few applications from the principle that Jesus Christ controls history that need to be stated.

IX. Application.

The United States is presently a house divided and is primed to become Balkanized. The major division is between Traditionalists and Progressives. By dominating the academy and media for half a century, the Progressives have educated and propagandized over half the voting population of this country into believing or accepting as normal their collectivist worldview.

Our nation is already involved in a financial crisis and it is on the verge of a political crisis. Our freedoms hang in the balance and the future of the client nation is in peril. Why is this? Hosea casts the clear light of divine wisdom on the answer in:

Hosea 4:6 - "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being My priest. Since you have forgotten the law of God, I also will forget your descendants."

The reason that our country has entered into the cycles of discipline is because those who have the knowledge have rejected it.

There are churches all across this land that not only do not teach the Word, but the theology to which they subscribe is heretical. Yet this is to be expected given the latitude of the free exercise clause.

The real issue in a client nation is whether those who are saved by grace will use their volition to not only grow in grace through Bible study but also apply its principles, mandates, and doctrines to their daily lives.

In the passage of Acts 19:23-41, there is a confrontation between the reality of Christ and the fantasy of Artemis. Paul's three-year mission to Ephesus laid the foundation for the ultimate demise of the Artemis cult and the rise of Christianity throughout Asia Minor. The following excerpt sums up Paul's historical impact that reverberated out from Ephesus and resounded throughout the Roman Empire:

Though Paul was probably not the first to bring Christianity to Ephesus, for Jews had long lived there, he was the first to make progress against the worship of Diana [Artemis]. As the fame of his teachings was carried by the pilgrims to their distant homes, his influence extended to every part of Asia Minor. In time, the pilgrims, with decreasing faith in (Artemis), came in fewer numbers; the sales of the shrines of the goddess fell off; (Artemis) of the Ephesians was no longer great; a Christian church was founded there and flourished and one of the first leaders was the apostle John.

Finally in 262 AD, when the temple of (Artemis) was again burned [by invading Goths], its influence had so far departed that it was never again rebuilt. (Artemis) was dead. Ephesus became a Christian city, and in 341 AD a council of the Christian church was held there.¹ The city itself soon lost its importance and decreased in population. The sculptured stones of its great buildings, which were no longer in use and were falling to ruins, were carried away to Italy, and especially to Constantinople for the great church of Saint Sophia [Hagia Sophia]. In 1308 the Turks took possession of the little that remained of the city, and deported or murdered its inhabitants. The Cayster [kā-is'-ter] river, overflowing its banks, gradually covered with its muddy deposit the spot where the temple of (Artemis) had once stood, and at last its very site was forgotten.²

¹ "This council condemned Nestorius and justified the cult of the Virgin as Theotokos, 'mother of God'" (*Encyclopaedia Britannica: Macropaedia* [Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1979], 6:905).

² E. J. Banks, "Ephesus," in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, James Orr, gen. ed. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956), 2:961-62.