

Acts 19:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

They were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians—The Greek θυμός (thumos, wrath) describes fierce, passionate anger erupting spontaneously. Their chant μεγάλη ἡ Ἀρτεμις Ἐφεσίων (megalē hē Artemis Ephesiōn) was likely a cultic formula repeated in temple rituals. Demetrius's economic appeal (verses 25-27) ignited religious nationalism—economic self-interest masquerading as theological devotion.

This mob reaction reveals how paganism conflates religion, economics, and civic pride into an inseparable identity. When the gospel threatens any component, the entire system responds with rage. The craftsmen's anger wasn't theological—they feared revenue loss—but they weaponized religious fervor to defend financial interests.

Historical Context

The Artemision (Temple of Artemis) at Ephesus was one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, a massive structure rebuilt after arson in 356 BC. The silver shrine industry employed hundreds of craftsmen producing miniature temples and goddess statues for pilgrims. Ephesus's economy depended heavily on religious tourism, making Paul's preaching an economic threat to the city's prosperity.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How do modern cultural or economic systems similarly weaponize religious language to defend non-spiritual interests?
2. When has the gospel threatened your financial security or cultural identity, and how did you respond?

Interlinear Text

Ἄκούσαντες	δὲ	καὶ	γενόμενοι	πλήρεις	θυμοῦ
when they heard	And	and	these sayings they were	full	of wrath
G191	G1161	G2532	G1096	G4134	G2372
ἔκραζον	λέγοντες	Μεγάλη	ἡ	Ἄρτεμις	Ἐφεσίων
cried out	saying	Great	G3588	is Diana	of the Ephesians
G2896	G3004	G3173		G735	G2180

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