

Acts 19:41

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly—The town clerk's authority is absolute; the crowd obeys immediately. The verb ἀπέλυσε (apelyse, 'dismissed, released, sent away') is the same used for Pilate releasing Barabbas and for Jesus 'sending away' crowds. The mob that had been shouting for hours (v. 34 notes 'about the space of two hours') disperses at an official's word, demonstrating that civic authority, when rightly used, can quell chaos.

This **assembly** (ἐκκλησίαν, ekklēsia) is now legally dismissed, ending the illegal gathering. The parallel is instructive: just as the town clerk authoritatively dismisses an unlawful assembly, Christ will one day judge and dismiss all earthly assemblies that oppose His kingdom. Meanwhile, the true ekklēsia—the church—continues to grow even as hostile assemblies are scattered. God's sovereign orchestration through a pagan official saved Paul from mob violence and set a legal precedent protecting Christian preaching.

Historical Context

This dramatic scene in the Ephesian theater (which held 25,000 people) ended a crisis that could have destroyed the church's work in Asia Minor's most influential city. Paul's ministry in Ephesus lasted three years (Acts 20:31) and resulted in 'all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus' (Acts 19:10). This riot marked both the high point of opposition and the moment when Christianity's legal status in Asia was clarified: it was not a temple-robbing insurrection but a

legitimate teaching. The precedent would protect churches throughout the province.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does this episode demonstrate that the greatest threats to gospel advance can be suddenly and unexpectedly resolved by God's providence?
2. What does the immediate obedience to the town clerk's dismissal teach about God's use of governmental authority to maintain order?
3. In what ways might we pray for God to raise up authorities—even unbelieving ones—who will protect religious liberty and gospel proclamation?

Interlinear Text

καί	ταῦτά	εἰπών	ἀπέλυσεν	τήν	ἐκκλησίαν
And	thus	spoken	he dismissed	G3588	the assembly
G2532	G5023	G2036	G630		G1577

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