

PART 25: EXALTING JESUS INSTEAD OF IDOLS

ACTS 19:10-41

Mike Taylor

www.TaylorNotes.Info/monday



MAIN IDEA

In Paul's extended Word-driven ministry in Ephesus, many Ephesians turned from idols to the living Christ; Luke records some significant events surrounding this spiritual awakening.

I. UNDERSTANDING IDOLATRY

- A. Definition: idolatry is the worship of someone or something other than God as though it were God.
- B. What are idols? In reality, idols are impotent blocks of stone or wood, and their power exists only in the minds of the worshipers.
- C. Idolatry in Bible times: The most prevalent form of idolatry in Bible times was the worship of images that were thought to embody the various pagan deities. People knew they were stone and pieces of wood

representing a pagan god but they believed they became inhabited by a god (avatar).

- D. Idolatry in the Bible: The significance God places upon it is reflected in the fact that the first of the Ten Commandments refers to idolatry: “*You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me*” (Exodus 20:3-5). The idol of the god Dagon was twice knocked to the floor by God to show the Philistines just who was God and who wasn't (1 Samuel 5:1-5). The “contest” between God and His prophet Elijah and the 450 prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel is a dramatic example of the power of the true God and the impotence of false gods (1 Kings 18:19-40). The testimony of Scripture is that God alone is worthy of worship. Idol worship robs God of the glory that is rightfully His, and that is something He will not tolerate (Isaiah 42:8).
- E. Idolatry today: Even today there are religions that bow before statues and icons, a practice forbidden by God's Word. Idolatry extends beyond the worship of idols and images and false gods. Our modern idols are many and varied. Even for those who do not bow physically before a statue, idolatry is a matter of the heart—pride, self-centeredness, greed, gluttony, a love for possessions and ultimately rebellion against God. Is it any wonder that God hates it?

II. IDOLATRY IN EPHESUS



Artemis was a goddess worshiped in the ancient world. The Greeks considered her the twin sister of Apollo and the goddess of hunting and wilderness and the protector of unmarried girls.

The Artemis mentioned in the book of Acts was a different deity—a localized goddess of the Ephesians—but she bore the same name (Latinized as “Diana”) as the goddess of Greek mythology.

Her temple in Ephesus was considered one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.