

## Hitting them in the Pocket – Acts 19: 21 – 41



People get upset when they think their source of income is being threatened. Demetrius was no exception to this general rule. A silversmith, he made and sold models of the temple of the goddess Artemis. Artemis was the Greek name of the goddess known to the Romans as Diana, and she was particularly important to the Ephesians. Her temple in Ephesus was a splendid building, regarded as one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Visitors to the city bought models of the temple as souvenirs and objects of worship to keep in their own homes. Archaeologists have found terra-cotta versions of these models, but no silver ones, many of which were probably melted down to make other objects in subsequent centuries.

The number of Christian believers was growing in the city, as Paul and his fellow evangelists continued their mission there. Demetrius called together the members of the employers' federation (as we would call it), to highlight the fact that this was likely to bring about a downturn in their sales figures. He managed to stir up a quite a disturbance, but seems to have been better at starting a protest than keeping one going. There was confusion about what the aims of the protestors were, and against whom they were directing their anger.

Eventually the town clerk succeeded in calming the crowd. He warned them of the danger of reprisals from the Roman authorities if the peace of the city were to be endangered by a riot. If the protestors wanted to pursue the matter further, he said, they should do it properly through the courts. Nothing more, however, appears to have come of it.

Christians down through the centuries have often faced opposition from people whose vested interests have been threatened by their teaching. The abolition of slavery, better conditions for working people, and the protection of the environment have all been championed by Christians and opposed by those who feared their personal income and wealth would be reduced as a result. Standing up for the truth against powerful self-interests has never been easy.

***A prayer:***

*Grant us, O Lord, wisdom, strength and courage to serve the purposes of your eternal Kingdom here in the world today, whatever it may cost us. AMEN*

**- Rev John Barnett**

**Image:** Temple of Artemis (Diana) at Ephesus (<https://istanbulclues.com/artemis-temple-history-facts/>)