

**The Attackers: Black Sheep: Conversions to Christianity Increase in Ephesus, Acts 19:20; Growth Indicates Life, Heb 4:12; Demetrius: Head of the Metalworkers Union which Makes Models of the Temple of Artemis; Demetrius Organizes the Workers to Oppose Paul; Rhetorical Veil: Protect the Reputation of Artemis; Hidden Agenda: Preserve Union Jobs; Acts 19:24–28**

**Acts 19:20** - So the word of the Lord was growing mightily and prevailing.

21. The word for growing is the imperfect active indicative of the verb **αὐξάνω (auxánō)**: “to grow.” “For something to grow it must ... have the element of life within it.”<sup>1</sup>
22. The Word of God is “alive and powerful” (Hebrews 4:12). In the soul of a positive believer, the Word grows within him as does a seed when planted on “good ground” (Matthew 13:8).
23. Here *auxánō* is an ingressive imperfect which “is often used to stress the beginning of an action, with the implication that it continued for some time. The ingressive imperfect is especially used in narrative literature when a change in activity is noted. The translation ought to be “began growing.”<sup>2</sup>
24. This is followed by the imperfect active indicative of the verb **ισχύω (ischúō)**: “acquiring strength.”
25. The verb *ischúō* is a progressive imperfect “used to describe an action or state that is in progress in past time from the viewpoint of the speaker.”<sup>3</sup>
26. The translation expanded reads as follows:

**Acts 19:20** - So the word of the Lord began growing mightily, acquiring prevailing strength. (CTL)

27. As this growth continued, it became quite widespread. Bible doctrine in the souls of an ever-increasing number of people in Ephesus and throughout the Roman province of Asia was drawing people away from the worship of Artemis.
28. The impact of the Word on the heathen activities surrounding the worship of Artemis introduces us to our next attacker.

**B. Demetrius: Acts 19:23–41:**

1. Wherever the Word of God is magnified in the souls of men, the Dark Side will inevitably mount a counterattack.
2. It is identified in verse 23 as “no small disturbance concerning the Way.”
3. This “disturbance” was a calculated reaction to the Gospel and the doctrine of salvation through Jesus Christ Who is regarded by Christians as “the Way.”
4. The rouser of the rabble is none other than Demetrius, who is head of the United Metalworkers Association:

<sup>1</sup> Spiros Zodhiates, gen. ed., “αὐξάνω,” in *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, rev. ed. (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 1993), 289.

<sup>2</sup> Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 544.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 543.

**Acts 19:24** - For a man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis, was bringing no little business to the craftsmen; (NASB)

5. These shrines – **ναοῦς (naoús)** – were small models of the temple of Artemis. Most who came into Ephesus to worship at the temple would buy these on leaving town so they could worship at home.
6. A number of artisans were involved in producing bric-a-brac for the heathen and Demetrius was the ring leader in stoking their emotions to a level of civil disobedience.
7. The word for the disobedience is the noun **τάραχος (tárachos)**: “to stir up or agitate.” In this context someone fomented a public disturbance and verse 25 indicates it was Demetrius.

**Acts 19:25** - these craftsmen Demetrius gathered together with the workmen of similar trades and said, “Men, you know that our prosperity depends upon this business.

**v. 26** - “You see and hear that not only in Ephesus, but in almost all of Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away a considerable number of people, saying that gods made with hands are no gods at all.

**v. 27** - “Not only is there danger that this trade of ours fall into disrepute, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis be regarded as worthless and that she whom all of Asia and the world worship will even be dethroned from her magnificence.” (NASB)

8. Demetrius’s speech to the metalworkers union made two points, both of which were true:
  - (1) “Men, you know that our prosperity depends upon making bric-a-brac for those who worship Artemis.” Very true.
  - (2) “This Jesus will dethrone the great goddess Artemis whom all Asia and the world worship.” Largely true, but of no real concern for Demetrius.
9. In order to rally public opinion to a cause, a popular issue must be presented as threatened, i.e., the worship of Artemis.
10. Every crusade needs a rallying cry which the riled up metalworkers in an emotional reaction provide in:

**Acts 19:28** - When the metalworkers heard this and were filled with rage, they began crying out, saying, “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!”

11. The issue is clear and the crisis is identified: “If people stop worshipping Artemis and convert to Christianity, we will all be out of a job.”