

Church – The Beginnings, Part 61
Ephesus – Paul, Miracles, Demons, and Book Burning - Acts 19:11-20
12/31/2017
NEW LIFE FELLOWSHIP

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Acts 19:11-20

Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, ¹² so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them. ¹³ Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches." ¹⁴ Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so. ¹⁵ And the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?" ¹⁶ Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. ¹⁷ This became known both to all Jews and Greeks dwelling in Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. ¹⁸ And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. ¹⁹ Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totaled fifty thousand pieces of silver. ²⁰ So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.

1. Review → Ephesus Missions/Gospel Ministry

- Paul planted the church back in Acts 18
- Paul left Aquila and Priscilla in charge while he went on other Missionary Trips
- Apollos got saved
- 12 Disciples of John the Baptist got saved
- For 3 more months the Synagogue of Ephesus was wide open for the Gospel until ...
- Paul and the Disciples of Jesus Christ (i.e. The Church of Ephesus) moved to the school of Tyrannus for the next 2 years

2. Acts 19:11-12 → during that 2 years – here are some things that happened, including God providing Extraordinary, Unusual, and Special Miraculous Powers through Paul the apostle. Handkerchiefs and Aprons – that touch the body of Paul – could heal people and cast out demons. Very unusual, special, and extraordinary, indeed. Sounds just like what God did with Peter in Acts 5:14-16 – except in that case it was Peter's shadow that God used to heal folks and cast out demons, in Jesus' Name. All Miracles of God are unusual, extraordinary, and special. So, why this kind of emphasis. → Warfare. These miracles also affected the demonic – the spiritual realm, just like when Jesus cast out LEGION from the Gerasene/Gadarene Demoniac into the pigs. It was special and very powerful. God gave Paul special POWERS (the word is *dúnamis* (GK: δύναμις) → power / authority / ability). Based on the context of both verses (11 & 12) we can see that this special power was in the form of Miracles. **Special, Powerful, Extraordinary Miracles.**

Why? All Miracles by Jesus Christ and the Apostles are given to CONFIRM, to TESTIFY, to AFFIRM the Message of the Kingdom of God, the Gospel of Christ. God gives them to convince the people, as a follow-up, to show, beyond any shadow of doubt that the Gospel of Christ, the Message of Christ, the Word of God is TRUE and REAL. (see **Hebrews 2:1-4**)

3. 7 sons of Sceva – Jewish Exorcists – Hey let's try out what Paul is using ... hmmm ... how did that work? Acts 19:13-16 – descendants of Aaron – sons of a Levitical chief priest.

Are you known by the Devil & his demons? "I know Jesus, and Paul I know, but who are you?" Unless a person is owned by Christ, truly Born-Again in Christ, filled with His Holy Spirit, walking with Christ and walking in Christ's holiness and righteousness – no one has any business casting out demons – after the New Covenant (the Kingdom of God) – had come on the scene. (look at Luke 11:19)

Demon possessed people can be very powerful – **physically** and **intellectually** – read Ephesians 6:10-20 – verse 12: “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against **principalities**, against powers, against the **rulers** of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the **heavenly places**.” (also compare with Daniel 10). Some of those demonic powers are influencing government → “principalities” & “high places”. Only Christ is more powerful than the Devil and his legion of demons. This is very reminiscent of Gerasene/Gadarene Demoniac(s) - the man who was demon possessed by many demons – they called themselves → **LEGION** – as seen in Mathew 8:28-34, Mark 5:1-20 and Luke 8:26-39 – that man was bound in chains was able to break them. Extraordinary Supernatural Power. Paul was given supernatural power to heal folks and to **cast out demons**, even with his handkerchief and/or apron – Christ is so powerful, even the clothing of the apostle Paul (or the Shadow of Peter – see Acts 5) can do the work (so that Christ gets all the glory).

Evidently there were a lot of demon possessed people and demonic strongholds in Ephesus. These 7 sons of Sceva had a full-time Exorcism Business in Ephesus as proof. And, before Christ came, before the Gospel came to Ephesus, their business might have been effective (again, see Luke 11:19). But, now, that the New Covenant, the Kingdom of God, the Gospel had moved into town and was **planted** – i.e. → the Church of Ephesus in **CHRIST** ... their business wasn't doing so well, anymore. You see, if things were going OK with their business, why use → “We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches.” ?

Paul's Ministry Impact in Ephesus (God's Powerful Ministry Impact through Paul and the church) was so powerful that even these Jewish Exorcists wanted to use Paul's words to help out – well, just the mere words aren't enough. Those 7 sons of Sceva needed that Saving Power of Jesus Christ, just as much as that demon possessed man. This was **EXPOSED** by verse 16 → Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. → they were naked, ashamed and exposed. Only the Covering of Jesus Christ's Salvation, Grace, Mercy, and Forever Forgiveness would cover their nakedness. These were of those Jews of the Synagogue that Hardened their heart against believing in Jesus Christ as their Messiah. They did not follow Paul into the School of Tyrannus. They were outside of Christ and did not have the Covering of Christ to protect them from the Wrath of God nor from the wrath of Satan and the World. Only in Christ is a person saved, from the Wrath of God and the Power of Satan. No Christian, truly Born-Again Christian can be demon possessed. When the Holy Spirit comes in a takes residence in a believer's life, there is **NO** room for the demonic. Christ fills the believer, Christ is enough.

4. **The IMPACT of God's Miracles Through Paul and the Failure of the 7 sons of Sceva** → **Acts 19:17-20** → The town of Ephesus (most of the folks in the town) got the **MEMO** ... They understood what is written in verses 11 thru 16 – **ONLY CHRIST is MORE Powerful than the Demonic** – than the old and new “gods” and “goddesses” of that age (1 Cor. 8 & 10 → the gods are really demons). They understood that only those **IN Christ** – those who are **Disciples of Christ, Born-Again in Christ** – can have the power over the devil and demons. They understood that a person being in Christ, surrendered to Christ, trusting in Christ is **True LIFE and Truth**. **The Fear of God fell on them and the Name of the LORD Jesus was MAGNIFIED**. Instead of Jesus' name (the movement and followers associated) being mocked, scoffed and spurned – folks were in **AWE** and wanted to be a part of this new movement in Jesus Christ.

REPENTANCE – RENOUNCING – CONFESSING – The COST – The WORD SPREAD

Magic – Nefarious Arts – Wicked Arts – Dark Power over other people (similar to voodoo) Book Burning → Books / Scrolls / Writings ... Burned. They were coming to Christ – in the process of **REPENTANCE** and **Trusting in Christ** – they **Burned all the Bridges to the Open Doors** to the **Demonic** that they had. They **SHUT the DOORS** to the **DEVIL** and the **WORLD** and their **OLD Belief Systems**. This is similar to the Old Testament actions of cutting down and burning the idols. (see 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10). This is what repentance looks like.

The **FRUIT** → (So,) In this way, this is how **the WORD of the LORD Grew Mightily and PREVAILED!** (vs. 20) [also see Proverbs 28:13 regarding Repentance / Confession]

It was moving forward, growing – growing in impact, influence and **PREVAILING**