

- A Study in Acts -

**Chapter Nineteen – Third Journey of Paul**

**ACTS 19:11-20:**

We began the third journey in **Chapter 18:23**. Paul returned from the second journey to Antioch of Syria and then went out again to the region of **Galatia** and **Phrygia** strengthening the brethren in these locations; Luke tells us.

Please use the map provided.

Paul has come to **Ephesus** and has met and worked with disciples of the coming Messiah by the work of John the Baptist. He would now more accurately explain the way of God through Jesus Christ to them (see: **Acts 18:26**). Paul would continue to work in the synagogues of the Jews for 3 months; however, when some were hardened, he went to the school of Tyrannus and continued to teach from this singular location for two years, successfully bringing the Gospel's truth to all of Asia. We will now look into some of the events that transpired here during these two years.

**Text #1:**

**Acts 19:11-12** “Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul,<sup>12</sup> 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.”

**Unusual Miracles:** I would challenge anyone to think of a single miracle recorded in scripture and testified of by eyewitnesses to be anything but unusual by their very existence; however, here Luke records that these miracles even went further out of the common core of miracles being performed. These miracles do; however, share with the miracles of our Lord recorded in **Mark 6:56** (where just the hem of His garment might heal those brought); and in **Acts 5:15** (where just the shadow of Peter passing by might heal those on whom it fell).

Once again, notice the power of these miracles, in that diseases and evil spirits went out of them in the presence of many witnesses. There were no receiving lines to predetermine worth or faith, and the results we will read in **vs. 18-20** are the powerful convicted surety of God in Jesus Christ.

**Text #2:**

**Acts 19:13-16** “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.”<sup>14</sup> Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so.

<sup>15</sup> And the evil spirit answered and said, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?”

**<sup>16</sup> 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.”**

**Itinerant Jewish Exorcists:** The term “Itinerant” is from the Greek, “*Perierchomai*”, which simply means, ‘to go about’; and is additionally translated as “strolling” or “Vagabond”. These were traveling Jews, who went from place to place, making a living by using spells, magic words, and incantations to expel supposed evil spirits.

Uniquely enough, this was something condemned by the Law of Moses, and in fact God set Himself against any such behavior – **Numbers 19:26-31; 20:6** (these were the sons of a chief priest of the Jews, Luke records, to show the perversion of the Law by those who claimed to know and follow it).

**Call the Name of the Lord Jesus:** Since these individuals made their living by seeking certain words that they believed had magical properties, they used the name that Paul glorified in the performance of miracles that were performed by him. This is emphasized by Luke with this statement, “**We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches.**”

**The Evil Spirit Pushes Back:** Even though this is enjoyable reading (I do not wish to make light, but I have never been able to read this without laughter), let us not forget that with God there is always purpose and order. The miracles performed by Jesus were done to confirm that He had been sent by God – **Acts 2:22**. The miracles of the Apostles were done to confirm that the word they spoke was truly from God – **Mark 16:20**. The statement from this nefarious source demands that we appreciate the unity in the source of singular authority that confirms the great name Paul is preaching for salvation. Not only does this evil spirit know Jesus the Christ of God, but additionally, he knows the Apostle of Jesus Christ who has been sent to preach His name.

This is a demonstration of the name that God has given Jesus, that every knee must bow – **Philippians 2:10**; and any source that attempts to use His Name for anything contrary to God’s intent, should be accursed – **Galatians 1:8-9**.

Finally, this single man jumped on these seven brothers, overpowered them, and sent them out into the streets naked and wounded: for all to see!

**Text #3:**

**Acts 19:17-20** “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. <sup>18</sup> And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. <sup>19</sup> 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. <sup>20</sup> So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.”

**Became Known to All:** Here we see the effect of the true power of the Lord, and the universal result in stark contrast to those claiming power but were truly impostors. Here we also see the pure intent of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to glorify the name that is above every name!

**Books Burned:** In addition to the now widespread fame of the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, many believed in Him, and that demanded that they cease and desist from all evil practices. This is emphasized by Luke demonstrating that this change in mind and behavior was costly (something not easily walked away from, unless they were truly converted to know better).

The value of the books that were destroyed because of their evil content was fifty thousand pieces of silver. The best way to describe the value is to know that one piece of silver was considered a day's wages. This would be about the equivalent of 40 people's wages, each working 3 and a quarter year, every single day without a day off, to obtain this single sum.

**The Word of the Lord Grew:** In summary, we have the confirmation of the true purpose of these miracles; to confirm the word. These miracles were not done to promote men, or even the miracle in and of itself. Instead, it focused the true understanding that the words of Paul carried the weight of God through Jesus Christ the King. This was Paul's commission in the world, note His words to the Roman Christians:

**Romans 1:1-5** "Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated to the gospel of God <sup>2</sup> which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, <sup>3</sup> concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, <sup>4</sup> *and declared to be* the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. <sup>5</sup> Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name"

Next: "Paul Writes 1 Corinthians!"