

Acts 19:8-20 The Power Of The Gospel

I. The Gospel Is The Witness' Power To Persevere (8-10)

A. Paul's Preaching is Rejected In The Ephesian Synagogue (8-9a)

1. Paul Again Witnesses in the Synagogue (8)

- a. Paul consistently preached and witnessed for three months
- b. Paul reasoned with them
- c. Paul was persuading them about the kingdom of God

2. Paul's Teaching is Reviled and Rejected (9a)

- a. Some people became stubborn (hardened) and refused to believe
 - i. As Paul persisted to preach, they persisted to disbelieve – Their hearts became hard
 - ii. They refused to accept Jesus' fulfillment of God's kingdom
- b. Some people began speaking evil of "The Way"
 - i. "The Way is what Christianity was first called
 - ii. Notice that these people were speaking evil of the gospel publically

B. Paul Continues Preaching in a Different Location (9b-10)

1. Paul did not quit the mission, only the location (9b)

- a. He withdrew from those who were hardened
- b. He continued teaching daily in the school of Tyrannus
 - i. Notice that he took some disciples with him (separated the disciples) – some believed and followed Paul
 - ii. Evidently Paul continued to preach in a lecture hall or school which was either owned by Tyrannus or in which Tyrannus was a teacher.
- c. Paul has faced persecution and hindrances throughout his ministry, yet he continues to persevere for the sake of the gospel
 - i. He will continue this for two years (see v.10)

2. The Powerful Gospel Spreads Throughout the Region (10)

- a. Paul was persistent knowing that the gospel is the power of God – He continued for two years
- b. The gospel goes forth in power so that all of Asia heard it
 - i. This is the Roman province of Asia (modern Turkey)
 - ii. This is perhaps when the churches of Colossae, Laodicea, Sardis, etc. were founded
 - iii. Both Jews and Greeks in the region heard the word of the Lord

3. Paul Persisted because he knew that the gospel itself is the power of God. He was not deterred by his hindrances. He knew that the word itself is what does the converting.
- II. The Gospel is The Witness' Power To Overcome (11-16)
- A. God Confirms The Gospel Through Signs and Wonders (11-12)
 1. God did extraordinary miracles through Paul
 - a. Notice that it is God doing the miracles
 - b. Notice that these are called "special" miracles – they were uncommon even for miracles
 2. God Healed and Exorcised Spirits Through Paul's Garments
 - a. During the heat of the Day Paul probably wore aprons or handkerchiefs because of the sweat
 - b. These articles were taken to the sick and the diseases left them
 - c. These articles were taken to the oppressed and spirits came out of them
 3. Did Paul condone or command this to be done?
 - a. We are not told
 - b. I seriously doubt that Paul was selling these cloths like the T.V. evangelists do today
 - c. The point here is that God was doing "special" miracles through Paul
 - i. Ephesus was a city rooted in the occult and spiritualism
 - ii. God was demonstrating the power of the gospel and validating Paul's message in a way that would grab the city's attention
 - B. God Discredits Those Who Parrot His Gospel and His Name (13-16)
 1. Traveling Jewish Exorcists Try to Capitalize on the Power of Jesus' Name
 - a. There were Jews who made their living exorcising spirits in the superstitious city of Ephesus
 - b. Vagabond here means "itinerant" – they traveled from place to place
 - c. They saw the power they thought Paul wielded through Jesus' name and they wanted it
 2. Jewish Exorcists attempted to Use the Formula – I abjure you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches
 - a. It's clear they didn't believe the gospel
 - b. It's clear they didn't believe in Jesus and the Messiah
 - c. They used his name as a formula – even adding "whom Paul preaches" to make sure they have the right Jesus
 3. The Sons of Sceva are Humiliated and Overcome by a spirit (14-16)
 - a. The Sons of Sceva were trying to exorcise spirits by using the formula – "in Jesus' name" (14)

- b. The Sons of Sceva are Mocked by the evil spirit (15)
 - i. The spirit recognizes the power and name of Jesus
 - ii. The spirit recognizes the call and ministry of Paul
 - iii. The spirit asks the sons of Sceva – “Who are you?”
 - c. The Sons of Sceva are Overpowered by the spirit (16)
 - i. The man with the spirit leaped upon them
 - ii. The man with the spirit overpowered all seven of them, and prevailed over them
 - iii. The sons of Sceva run out wounded and naked
 - iv. They were humiliated by the spirit
 - d. Jesus’ name cannot be parroted in a formula. To come in His name is to come in His authority and to be identified with him. The Sons of Sceva were neither
 - 4. NOTICE: In the previous section a piece of cloth had overpowered evil spirits because of the power of Christ. Here, seven men can’t overpower a spirit without Christ.
- III. The Gospel is The Power That Changes Hearts (17-20)
 - A. Fear and Awe of Jesus Falls in Ephesus (17)
 - 1. The episode with the Sons of Sceva became known and Jesus’ power is recognized in the city
 - 2. Fear fell upon the people who have come face to face with the true and living God
 - 3. Jesus’ name is honored in the city because of the power it wielded
 - B. Many Converts Produce Fruit in Keeping With Repentance (18-19)
 - 1. Many people were converted to the gospel and believed
 - 2. These converts confessed their sinful practices in the occult
 - 3. Many who practiced these things repented and turned from them (19)
 - a. They brought their magic books together and burned them
 - b. The value of all these books amounted to fifty thousand pieces of silver
 - C. The Gospel itself Bore Fruit in Their Lives
 - 1. It produced faith and repentance in them
 - 2. It caused them to turn from their wicked lifestyles
 - 3. It caused them to destroy the things they knew were sinful
 - D. The Gospel Continues to Prevail (20)
 - 1. The word continued to increase
 - 2. The word continued to overcome wherever it goes

It is easy to be discouraged when we don’t see immediate results of conversions in our witness. We must remember that the gospel of Christ is the power that changes

hearts. We must persevere as Paul did, even if it means moving to a different area, and trust that God's word will prevail and increase, and that only the true Gospel of Christ has the power to overcome the enemy. Seven men without Christ cannot handle what a handkerchief can do.