

“THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH AND THE SPIRIT OF ERROR”

Acts 19:13-20

Pastor Keith E. Gephart

INTRODUCTION

Here in this passage we see phony workers who attempted to use the name of Jesus to imitate the work of the apostle Paul and thus to **draw people away from the truth of Christianity and into occult religious practices** that also had an **association with Judaism**. But, we also see that even the true believers in Jesus Christ had been infected spiritually by their corrupt environment and **were seeking to blend Christianity with occult practices**.

Despite all of this religious and spiritual confusion, one thing becomes very clear: **THOSE WHO ARE TRUE BELIEVERS WILL REPENT AND TURN FROM THEIR BAD WORKS AND WILL EVIDENCE THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT. Those who are false will someday be defeated and overcome and shown to be counterfeit, and one day will also hear the Lord’s “depart from me you who work iniquity, for I never knew you.”**

Three important lessons here:

- 1) **You must avoid all associations with the occult.**
- 2) **You must learn to distinguish truth from error.**
- 3) **You must turn from the Corruption of the world and rid yourself of evil deeds and works of flesh.**

For: **TRUE BELIEVERS ADHERE TO THE TRUTH AND TURN AWAY FROM WORKS OF ERROR.**

These lessons are shown by The Exposure and Defeat of false Workers and by The Repentance and Dedication of true believers in Christ.

- I. THE EXPOSURE AND DEFEAT OF FALSE WORKERS (vv. 13-17)
 - A. Mixture of Truth and Error
 1. Jewish
 2. Somehow connected with family of high priest, in reality or claim
 3. Seven sons of Sceva—special concept of “seven”?
 - B. Magic and Occult practice was part of their ritual
 - C. Mastery of the magicians by the demon (15-16)
 1. Acknowledgment of Jesus and Paul—**they have truth and real Power** (15)
Note: **“Who are YOU?”**
 2. Leaping on them—what a shock!—subduing them, thus overpowering them.
False teaching has no power over the wicked one—only the truth handled by true servants of the Lord!
 3. Tearing their clothes or ripping them off.
 4. Wounding them. **What a pitiable picture of the helplessness of false doctrine and workers!**
 - D. Magnification of the Name of the Lord Jesus (17)
 1. The incident became common knowledge
 2. The **fear of God** came upon all—both Jews and Greeks
 3. In this way Christ is truly magnified

When Error and False Teachers are put in their place, there is space for believers to grow & flourish.

II. THE REPENTANCE AND DEDICATION OF TRUE BELIEVERS IN CHRIST

- A. They were in a state of belief—true faith that continued and proved itself.
- B. Their faith was growing and when convicted of sin they responded—they “**kept coming.**”
- C. They confessed their sinful practices and deeds.
- D. They exposed and made known their wicked deeds—An open, voluntary confession.
- E. They had sinned against others and needed to make public confession and make it right.
 - Involvement in magic and occult deeds had damaged the Lord’s name and weakened the testimony of His church.
 - They had involved others in their practices, hurting them and setting a bad example.
 - Some had likely taken money from people and hurt them financially.
 - They also wanted to give glory to God publicly to exalt His name.
- F. They wanted to make a clean break with Wickedness (19)
 1. They burned their “books”—Ephesus noted for an abundance of magical arts, charms, chants, occult practice.
 2. They publicly exposed the falsity and corruption of their former ways.
 3. They willingly bore the financial loss. [50,000 pieces of silver is a lot of money: about \$250,000.00—maybe more in today’s value.]
 4. They never wanted to turn back to **the world** and **its corrupt ways**.

What are you clinging to that you ought to expose and get rid of? How we need a real revival!

A genuine believer will not hide his sins—he will confess and forsake them and expose them!

WHAT DO YOU HAVE OF OCCULT PRACTICES, FALSE RELIGIOUS IDEAS, PORNOGRAPHY, CORRUPT LITERATURE, WORLDLY MUSIC, SUBSTANCE ABUSE HABITS, PLACES YOU VISIT THAT ARE UNGODLY, FRIENDS YOU HAVE THAT YOU NEED TO DISCARD, TV, MOVIE, INTERNET USE, ETC?

CONCLUSION

Note the conclusion of all this (v. 20):

- 1) *The Word of the Lord was growing mightily.*
- 2) *The word of the Lord was prevailing.*

If that is not happening in our church or in your life then likely you have not learned the lessons:

- 1) **You must avoid all associations with the occult.**
- 2) **You must learn to distinguish truth from error.**
- 3) **You must turn from the Corruption of the world and rid yourself of evil deeds and works of flesh.**

It is time that we get serious in our Christian lives: life is fleeting!

It is not about you; it is not about me. It is about the Lord and His word!

TRUE BELIEVERS ADHERE TO THE TRUTH AND TURN AWAY FROM WORKS OF ERROR.