

# **“SEPARATION FOR THE GOSPEL”**

**Acts 19:8-12**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Paul had now kept his word and returned to Ephesus. His desire to preach the gospel here was now finally a reality. He would return to the same synagogue where he had been warmly received earlier and invited to stay (18:19-20). However, after three months the same problems of opposition and antagonism toward the Gospel arose again and Paul was forced to make a change; separation was necessary.

The biblical doctrine of separation is not in much favor within evangelicalism. However, here we see that the faithful practice led to the explosive growth of the pure and unadulterated Gospel and also resulted in the manifestation of numerous mighty works of divine power.

Compromise of the truth is never God’s will; working with enemies of the Gospel is never a Biblically acceptable practice. It matters not whether the compromise is with Jewish teachers, cultists, liberal Christians, or evangelical compromisers.

**God’s word demands that we stand for the Gospel and refuse to compromise the truth.**

- I. **PERSUASIVE PREACHING (8)**
  - A. Speaking out boldly—free speech, unashamed of the truth
  - B. Reasonable speech
  - C. Persuasive speech
  - D. Preaching the “kingdom of God.”
  
- II. **PURIFIED PRACTICE (9)**
  - A. The opposition of the Gospel’s enemies
    1. Becoming hardened
    2. Being disobedient and unbelieving
    3. Speaking evil of The Way—the only way of truth and salvation in Christ
  
  - B. The Corrective Carried out by Paul
    1. Paul withdrew—“became an apostate” to the Jews
    2. Paul separated the disciples—see II Cor. 6:17
    3. Paul established a new purified fellowship of believers in Christ
    4. He took the believers to “school”—a place of “leisure activity” in study and learning!
    5. Tyrannus may have been another significant benefactor of the Gospel
    6. Paul worked when others were resting and sleeping: 11:00 AM-4:00 PM
  
- III. **PERVASIVE INFLUENCE (10)**
  - A. Two full years of Gospel preaching and teaching

- B. “All who lived in Asia heard the **word of the Lord**”—cf. v. 26, the words of an opponent.
- C. Both Jews and Greeks heard and many were converted.
- D. Likely the Churches of Colossae and Hierapolis were established at this time, along with the Seven Churches of Asia listed in Rev. 2-3.
- E. Paul likely uses several trained preachers to visit these areas and start churches—including Timothy, Epaphras, Archippus and others.
- F. Paul had numerous contacts with Corinth while here, including letters and visitors from them, a now lost letter of his, I Corinthians, and possibly a brief visit there.

#### IV. POWERFUL WORKS (11-12)

- A. These miracles were “not ones that happen”; that is, not the common ones; they were “extraordinary.”
- B. They were done “by the hands of Paul”—directly through the divine influence in Paul’s life.
- C. Articles taken from contact with Paul’s body, and associated with his daily manual labor—“sweatbands” for his head and “aprons” wrapped around his waist—were taken to those needing physical deliverance and to whom Paul was unavailable to personally go.
- D. People were healed of diseases—the diseases “left them”—and the evil spirits possessing people “went out”, departed from them.
- E. **The Scriptures do not condone superstitious practices here, any more than the practice of touching the hem of Jesus’ garment, or of Peter’s shadow coming across someone.**
  - These are clearly said to be exceptional situations, not the norm.
  - If the Lord refused to ever manifest Himself when humans had any kind of superstitious ideas, we would be much poorer in divine manifestations! He meets us in our weakness and despite our weakness.
  - Preachers who send out “prayer cloths” today and anoint them and make money off them are counterfeits and frauds!

#### CONCLUSION

God’s work done in God’s way will have His blessing. Such has always been true.

We can expect God to work in our midst when we are faithful to preach persuasively, and to have a purified practice. He will multiply our spiritual influence and will manifest His power in our midst.

**We must stand for the Gospel and refuse to compromise the truth.**