

Explore the Bible: October 27

Motives • Acts 19:11-20

By Becky Brown



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While Paul was on furlough at Antioch, a Jewish man named Apollos arrived in Ephesus. Aquila and Priscilla became acquainted with him and helped him in a relationship of discipleship. By the time they were done, Apollos had become a more powerful force in ministry to the Jews of proclaiming that Jesus was the promised Christ prophesied throughout the Old Testament.

At the beginning of Acts 19, Apollos had gone to Corinth to minister. Paul returned to Ephesus. Once again, Paul reasoned first in the local synagogue, doing his best to explain Jesus through the Old Testament scriptures as Savior of the world. After three months, the rejection of the Gospel by these hardened Jews led Paul to move from the synagogue into a "day school." For two years, Paul continued ministering from that platform in Ephesus.

Acts 19:10 tells us an amazing truth. Through this ministry of teaching, ALL (the Greek word for that is ALL!!!) of Asia Minor HEARD the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks. God did exactly as He had promised to Paul through Paul.

Was all of Asia Minor saved? Not necessarily. Did all of Asia Minor hear the Gospel? Absolutely. Paul was simply allowing himself to be a willing tool of ministry in the hands of the One Who had called him. God was doing the work. Paul was the instrument being used. As we look at these next few verses of Acts 19, that is the truth we must keep in mind.

Paul was being used of God to help heal sick people. The power of God was so strong that even when people would be touched by the handkerchiefs or aprons worn by Paul, they were healed. Paul didn't star on a modern TV show and ask people to send money for a piece of his sweaty clothing "for a small (or large) donation." Paul did not obtain ONE ounce of fame for

himself. He knew God did the healing. How God chose to heal was God's business. It still is God's business.

Asia Minor and Achaia were filled with people who believed in false gods. They also delved frequently into things of the occult. Magicians plied their crass, evil crafts in the public square and in the privacy of homes. The ignorant public fell into the trap of the occult back then and they still dabble in it today to their complete destruction. Paul was proving to them that they needed to pay attention to truth and forsake falsehood. In fact, they were to flee from these acts that were in concord and in concert with the work of satan.

They responded by using Paul's method and seeking to profit themselves by employing the Name of the One Paul served: Jesus. "Hey, you know that guy Paul who is healing everyone in Ephesus? Well, we serve that Jesus that Paul serves. Let us cast out your demons!"

A Jewish "chief priest" named Sceva had seven sons. They claimed to be exorcists of demons by trade. They encountered a man possessed by an evil spirit and attempted to use "the power of the Name of Jesus that Paul preaches" to cast it out of him. The demon itself spoke through the mouth of this possessed man, exposing them as liars. The demon knew Jesus! The demon knew Paul! The demon proved these seven sons had zero power over satan's minions. The sons fled the scene wounded, naked, attacked and defeated by the power of the demon living inside this one man. Don't play with satan.

Those who practiced such arts of the occult heard about this. They burned their books. Great fear, awe and reverence for the God of Paul flooded the city. The word of the Lord grew mighty and prevailed. Don't play with God.

Brown leads LittleBrownLight Ministries.