

Acts 19:8-20, Paul's Ministry in Ephesus
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Overview

1. Hooker: how do you recognize an unbeliever? There are two forms of opposition:
 - a) Outright disbelief and rejection, 8-10. Easy to spot.
 - b) Imitation of the truth, yet without underlying faith, 11-19. Hard to detect. Danger of being fooled into thinking that someone is a believer.

 2. Two forms of Paul's ministry (cf. the two requests in 4:29,30: for boldness to speak, and for miracles)
 - a) teaching
 - b) miracles
(It is hardly coincidental that teaching brings the forthright rejection, but miracles are imitated.)

 3. In each case,
 - a) Paul's activity
 - b) The rejection
 - c) Divine response to the rejection
 - d) The outcome, with both Jews and Greeks:
 - 1) all in Asia heard the word of the Lord
 - 2) believers in Ephesus forsook their demonic activities.In both cases, opposition leads to an even greater result than would have occurred without it.

 4. [not in sermon] Two flights (!)
 - a) Paul from the synagogue
 - b) The sons of Sceva from the house of the possessed man
- A. 8-10, Outright Opposition to Teaching**
1. 8, Paul's Ministry
 - a) in the Synagogue as we have seen elsewhere. Well received there when he first came to Eph.
 - b) Boldness. Eph. 6:19, the product of prayer for one another.
 - c) Persistent (3 months)
 - d) Prepared: "disputing & persuading." Knew the questions and had figured out the answers.

 2. 9a, Jewish Opposition
Three stages
 - a) Hardening. Heb. 3:13, "through the deceitfulness of sin." The unbeliever thinks he is weighing the gospel rationally; in fact, he is clinging onto sin and is unwilling to let it go.
 - b) Unbelief. Not passive; s.t. translated "disobedient." They reject the message, because otherwise they would have to stop sinning.
 - c) Spoke evil. Having rejected it themselves, they can't stand the thought that someone else would accept it--that only

further condemns their own conduct.

d) *Application*: At root, people reject the gospel, not for intellectual reasons, but for moral ones--because they will not give up their sin. Need to understand this in ministry.

3. 9b, Response and Correction

a) Here, through Paul.

b) Separates the believers for instruction. Need for teaching distinct from evangelism.

c) Note meeting place--a school. Churches in the NT meet in homes or borrowed facilities--they do not invest in large capital plants.

4. 10, Outcome

The Word of the Lord heard throughout Asia by both Jews and Greeks.

a) Not because Paul was traveling around--he wasn't.

b) Probably not because everyone in Asia came to Tyrannus's school.

c) More likely, the effect of a well-instructed body of believers, who could articulate the gospel in their daily interactions. Cf. 2 Tim. 2:2. One objective of systematic Bible teaching is your ability to "give an answer," 2 Pet. 3:15.

B. 11-19, Unfounded Imitation of Miracles

Alongside teaching, miracles are a regular sign of the Spirit's power in Acts. Cf. 4:29,30; 2:43 "wonders and signs" accompanying the apostles' doctrine; 8:6, Philip.

1. 11-12, Paul's Ministry

a) Healing by means of indirect contact; the bandannas and aprons he used in his leatherwork. Cf. 5:15, Peter's shadow. Luke is concerned to show the parity of Paul with Peter, and this episode may be recorded here for that purpose.

b) What should our attitude be toward miracles today?

1) NOT reject the concept outright.

2) Recognize that Satan can do them too; 2 Thes. 2:9, "power and signs and lying wonders."

3) Judge the doctrine that accompanies them.

2. 13-14, Jewish imitation

a) A common perversion of the OT faith--lots of Jewish exorcists. Extends into the Kaballists of the middle ages. The Ineffable name was particularly valued as an incantation. They saw Paul's success--recognized its power--and sought to enjoy it themselves.

b) This particular Sceva is called "a chief priest"--from the family in Jerusalem? or a self-assigned title, part of his advertising?

c) *Application*: We should not be surprised that many of the practical teachings of Christianity (love, joy, kindness, tolerance) are echoed by unbelievers--or be tempted to regard them as second-class truths because they are echoed. They are ours by birthright--others only seek to borrow them.

3. 15-16, Response and Correction

- a) The demon's words: distinguish two words for "know." (cf. Jude 10; *epistamai* is what the brutes can do.)
- 1) I recognize Jesus (through personal experience; was this a demon cast out previously by our Lord?).
 - 2) I know of Paul (acknowledge his authority as a representative of Christ).
 - 3) Who are you? You have no claim on me.
- b) As a result, they fail utterly and publicly.
- c) *Application*: Unbelievers may seek to imitate us, but without the power of the HS, they cannot succeed, and their failure will be evident to any honest observer.

4. 17-19, Outcome

- a) As before, both Jews and Greeks are affected.
- b) Scope: previously, all of Asia, as believers went everywhere telling what they had learned. Now focused on Ephesus, where people had observed this single dramatic failure.
- c) Two-fold impact
- 1) 17 is general, both unbelievers and believers.
 - 2) 18-19 focus on the impact on believers, many of whom had been dabbling in the occult. Perhaps encouraged by Sceva! Seeking the kind of synergy that Sceva's sons attempted. Realizing the direct opposition of the two, they now reject the ungodly things, even at great financial cost.
- d) *Application*: We cannot serve both God and mammon; cannot "choose the best of both worlds." To follow Christ, we must forsake all; he must reign alone.

Summary

1. The ministry of the gospel can include both preaching and miracles.
2. Opposition can take two forms: direct outward rejection, but also imitation.
3. Response: Persevere with the believers in the face of rejection; recognize failure in the case of imitation.
4. Look to God to magnify his name.

Hymn: Great God of Wonders, 216

Analysis

- A. 8-10, Teaching
1. Paul

8 Ei)selqw\n de\ ei)s th\n sunagwgh\n e)parrhsia/zeto e)pi\
mh^nas trei^s dialego/menos kai\ pei/qwn [ta\] peri\ th^s
basilei/as tou^ qeou^.

2. Jews

9 w(s de/ tines e)sklhru/nonto kai\ h)pei/qoun kakologou^ntes
th\n o(do\n e)nw/pion tou^ plh/qous,

3. Response

a)posta\s a)p' au)tw^ n a)fw/risen tou\s maqhta/s, kaq' h(me/ran
dialego/menos e)n th^| sxolh^| Tura/nnou.

4. Results

a) 10 tou^to de\ e)ge/neto e)pi\ e)/th du/o,

b) w(/ste pa/ntas tou\s katoikou^ntas th\n)Asi/an a)kou^sai to\n
lo/gon tou^ kuri/ou,)Ioudai/ous te kai\ (/Ellhnas.

B. 11-19, Working Miracles

1. specification p: Paul's ministry

*Problem: it would be nice to have a break here, so that we have
+/- in teaching with result in 8-10, then +/- in miracles with
result in 11-19, but the _te_ in v.11 mitigates against this. NB:
a non-trivial number of mss do have _de_ here! Alternatively, the
te emphasizes the similarity between the two accounts.*

a) general: 11 Duna/meis te ou) ta\s tuxou/sas o(qeo\s e)poi/ei
dia\ tw^ n xeirw^ n Pau/lou,

b) specific: 12 w(/ste kai\
1) result p

a> text: e)pi\ tou\s a)sqenou^ntas a)pofe/resqai a)po\ tou^
xrwto\s au)tou^ souda/ria h)\ simiki/nqia

b> result:

1> kai\ a)palla/ssesqai a)p' au)tw^ n ta\s no/sous,

2> ta/ te pneu/mata ta\ ponhra\ e)kporeu/esqai.

2. specification p: Jewish imitation

a) general: 13 e)pexei/rhsan de/ tines kai\ tw^ n perierxome/nwn
)Ioudai/wn e)corkistw^ n o)noma/zein e)pi\ tou\s e)/xontas ta\
pneu/mata ta\ ponhra\ to\ o)/noma tou^ kuri/ou)Ihsou^
le/gontes, (Orki/zw u(ma^s to\n)Ihsou^ n o(\n Pau^los
khru/ssei.

b) specific

1) 14 h)^san de/ tinos Skeua^)Ioudai/ou a)rxiere/ws e(pta\
ui(oi\ tou^to poiou^ntes.

3. 15-16, Response

a) quote p

1) quote f: 15 a)pokriqe\n de\ to\ pneu^ma to\ ponhro\n
ei)^pen au)toi^s,

2) quote:

a> To\n [me\n])Ihsou^ n ginw/skw [through personal
experience]

b> kai\ to\n Pau^lon e)pi/stamai, [know about]

c> u(meis de\ ti/nes e)ste/;

b) 16 kai\ e)falo/menos o(a)/nqrwpos e)p' au)tou\s e)n w(^|
h)^n to\ pneu^ma to\ ponhro\n kai katakurieu/san autwn
i)/sxusen kat' au)tw^ n,

c) w(/ste gumnou\s kai\ tetraumatisme/nous e)kfugei^n e)k tou^ oi)/kou e)kei/nou.

4. 17-19, General Results

In both cases, ending with magnification of the Lord's name or his word.

a) on unbelievers:

- 1) 17 tou^to de\ e)ge/neto gnwsto\n pa^sin)Ioudai/ois te kai\ (/Ellhsin toi^s katoikou^sin th\n)/Efeson,
- 2) kai\ e)pe/pesen fo/bos e)pi\ pa/ntas au)tou/s,
- 3) kai\ e)megalu/neto to\ o)/noma tou^ kuri/ou)Ihsou^.

b) on believers

- 1) 18 polloi/ te tw^n pepisteuko/twn h)/rxonto e)comologou/menoi kai\ a)nagge/llontes ta\s pra/ceis au)tw^n.
- 2) 19 i(kanoi\ de\ tw^n ta\ peri/erga praca/ntwn sunene/gkantes ta\s bi/blous kate/kaion e)nw/pion pa/ntwn:
- 3) kai\ suneyh/fisan ta\s tima\s au)tw^n
- 4) kai\ eu(^ron a)rguri/ou muria/das pe/nte.
- 5) 20 Ou(/tw's kata\ kra/tos tou^ kuri/ou o(lo/gos hu)/canen kai\ i)/sxuen.