Ministry of the Holy Spirit
Acts 19:1-22
Lesson 35 – Does the Devil Know my Name

Acts 19:1-22 (NIV)
[1] While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples [2] and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." [3] So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied. [4] Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." [5] On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. [6] When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. [7] There were about twelve men in all. [8] Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. [9] But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them.

He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tooraynaus. [10] This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord. [11] God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, [12] so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.

[13] Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, "In the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out." [14] Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this.[15] [One day] the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you?"

[16] Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding. [17] When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor. [18] Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed their evil deeds. [19] A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas. [20] In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.

Discussion Questions

Part I: Believing in the Name of Jesus

1. What is the difference between knowing about Jesus and actually knowing Jesus? Scripture: Acts 19:13–16; Philippians 3:8–10

> The seven sons of Sceva knew the name of Jesus but lacked the relationship Paul possessed. How can someone spend years attending church, participating in ministry, and learning Scripture without developing a genuine relationship with Christ?

2. Can a person look like a Christian without actually being transformed by Christ? Scripture: Matthew 7:21–23; 2 Timothy 3:5

Jesus warns that some people will perform religious activities in His name but still lack a genuine relationship with Him. What are some ways people substitute religious activity for spiritual transformation?

3. If even demons believe that God exists, what makes Christian faith different from simply believing that God is real? Scripture: James 2:19–20; Romans 10:9–

What is the difference between intellectual belief and saving faith? How should genuine belief in Jesus influence our decisions, priorities, and conduct?

4. Why is it dangerous to depend on someone else's relationship with God instead of developing your own? Scripture: Acts 19:13–16; John 1:12–13

The sons of Sceva attempted to use the authority of the Jesus whom Paul preached. Why can't we rely on our parents' faith, our pastor's prayers, or our church membership as substitutes for our own relationship with Christ?

5. What does it really mean to exercise spiritual authority in the name of Jesus? Scripture: Acts 19:11–16; Luke 10:17–20

The sermon declares, "You cannot exercise an authority you do not possess." What is the difference between trusting Christ's authority and treating His name like a magical formula? Why must our confidence rest in Jesus rather than ourselves?

6. How can we distinguish between genuine faith and faith that only shows up when we need something from God? Scripture: John 15:4–5; Luke 6:46

Is Jesus someone we follow daily, or someone we call upon only during emergencies? What does our prayer life reveal about the depth of our relationship with Him?

Part II: Living in the Name of Jesus

7. What should change in a person's life after a genuine encounter with Jesus Christ? Scripture: Acts 9:1–6; 2 Corinthians 5:17

Paul went from persecuting Christians to preaching Christ. What evidence should others see in our attitudes, relationships, priorities, and behavior that demonstrates we have been transformed?

8. If salvation is a gift of grace and not something we earn, why are good works still important? Scripture: Ephesians 2:8–10; James 2:17–18

The sermon declares, "Good works are not the price of salvation; they are the fruit of salvation." How can we distinguish between doing good works to earn God's acceptance and doing good works because we have already received His grace?

9. How do we recognize spiritual warfare without blaming every difficulty, disappointment, or struggle on the devil? Scripture: Ephesians 6:10–18; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8–9

> What does it mean to stand firm against spiritual opposition? How do prayer, Scripture, faith, obedience, and spiritual discernment prepare us to respond?

10. Why is repentance more than simply feeling sorry for something we have done? Scripture: Acts 19:17–20; 2 Corinthians 7:10–11

> When the believers in Ephesus confessed their sins and publicly destroyed their sorcery scrolls, their repentance came with a cost. What are some habits, relationships, attitudes, or practices that Christians may need to surrender to demonstrate genuine repentance?

11. What does it mean to be a spiritual threat to the kingdom of darkness? Scripture: Matthew 5:14–16; Ephesians 5:8–11

> The sermon asks, "Does the devil know my name?" But what makes a Christian's life spiritually influential? Is it how loudly we proclaim our faith, or how faithfully we demonstrate Christ through our character, witness, service, and love?

12. Which matters more: being recognized by the devil or being known by Jesus? Scripture: Matthew 7:21–23; John 10:14, 27–28; 2 Timothy 2:19

> The sermon concludes, "More important than the devil knowing my name, I want Jesus to know that I have been faithful to His name." If Jesus examined your life today, what evidence would there be that you genuinely belong to Him? What areas of your life still need to come under His lordship?

Two Takeaway Challenges for the Week
Challenge 1: Examine Your Relationship, Not Your Religion

This week, conduct an honest spiritual inventory. Set aside your church membership, your title, your years of service, and your religious accomplishments.

Ask yourself: If nobody knew I attended church, would the way I live provide evidence that I know Jesus?

Identify one area where you have been practicing religion without demonstrating genuine spiritual transformation. Pray about it and take one concrete step toward change. Scripture: 2 Corinthians 13:5; John 15:5

Challenge 2: Make Your Faith Visible

This week, intentionally demonstrate your relationship with Jesus through your actions. Choose one situation where you would normally respond with anger, selfishness, compromise, impatience, or resentment. Instead, respond in a way that reflects the character of Christ. At the end of the week, ask yourself: Did my actions make the name of Jesus more visible to somebody else? Scripture: Colossians 3:17; Matthew 5:16

Final Discussion Question

If the devil never knew your name, but everybody around you could see Jesus living through you, would that be enough? That question brings the entire study back to its most important theological truth: The goal of the Christian life is not to become famous in hell. The goal is to be faithful to Christ on earth. And the greatest testimony is not that the devil knows who you are, but that your life demonstrates WHOSE YOU ARE!

Share your major takeaways from the Lesson/Sermon this week.

Commentary

ACTS: DIVISION IX

1. (19:1) **Ministry**: Paul arrived in Ephesus but Apollos had already left for Corinth. Therefore, the two men missed each other. When Priscilla and Aquila told Paul about Apollos, Paul's heart must have leaped for joy, for another young man was on fire for Christ. Through the upcoming years Paul would learn to love the young man and to long for his companionship and ministry (1 Cor. 16:12; Titus 3:13).

As Paul ministered in Ephesus, the thing to note is his commitment to reach men with the gospel of salvation. He was a messenger of salvation, so he focused his whole life upon sharing that message with those who were lost, hopeless, and doomed.

2. (19:2-9) **Salvation— Preaching**: this passage presents several important lessons on salvation. The lessons must be kept in mind as believers go about the task of proclaiming the glorious gospel of salvation.

1. Salvation necessitates *full belief and the receiving of the Holy Spirit*. While ministering in Ephesus, Paul ran across twelve disciples who had no association with the church at Ephesus. They were either drifting, or else were meeting for worship in another area of the city. They were just totally unknown to the church and to Priscilla and Aquila. In either case, Paul *found* them, and what results is one of the great lessons on salvation. (Note: they could not have been associated with Apollos, for he would have proclaimed Christ to them after his true conversion. See outline—· Acts 18:23-28 and Deeper Study #1—Acts 18:23-28.)

Note Paul's question. The correct translation of the Greek is: "Did you receive the Holy Spirit, having believed," or "...when you believed?" Some have held that these men believed and then the Holy Spirit came upon them some time after their belief. But this could not be the case, for it is contrary to the teaching of Scripture. They were disciples of John, Jewish proselytes, who were still looking for the coming Messiah (Acts 19:2-4, esp. Acts 19:3-4). They evidently were not Christian believers. They had not been baptized *in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ*. Their belief was incomplete. They believed what John had preached, that the Messiah was coming, but they did not know He had already come in the person of Jesus Christ. They had repented of sin as

preached by John, but they had not yet received the saving presence of the Lord Jesus in their hearts and lives. The living presence and power of Christ in the Person of the Holy Spirit had not yet saved them.

Note: Paul did not degrade their incomplete faith. He did not rebuke them for not grasping the full message of John. He approached them in a positive manner. He pointed out that they had done well by repenting of sin, for John did proclaim the baptism of repentance. *But John did something else*: he proclaimed to the people that...

"They should believe on Him, which should come after him [John], that is on Christ Jesus."

When the twelve disciples heard this, they responded just as they should have: they believed (Acts 19:4), were baptized (Acts 19:5), and received the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:6). (See Deeper Study #4, Tongues—Acts 2:4; note—Acts 10:46 for discussion on tongues.)

Thought 1. Note three significant lessons.

1) A person can repent and be baptized and still not have received Christ into his life and heart. He can *confess Christ* and still not have the Holy Spirit. When Paul looked at these men who *professed* to be disciples, he saw they were lacking something. The lack was visible, and he suspected what it was. They were not bearing the presence and fruit of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

"After that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise" (Ephes. 1:13).

"Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest [guarantee] of the Spirit in our hearts" (2 Cor. 1:22).

Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit" (2 Cor. 5:5).

2) Belief can be incomplete. Note closely: these men believed in the coming Messiah preached by John, and they had even repented and turned from their sin to God. But they still lacked the presence of Christ, that is, of the Holy Spirit in their lives. How many have changed their lives and are now living moral lives, but still have never accepted the *truth* of God's Son,

⇒ the truth of His coming to earth?

⇒ the truth of His securing our righteousness by living a sinless life?

⇒ the truth of His dying for our sins?

⇒ the truth of His arising from the dead?

Salvation necessitates *full* belief, believing the truth that Jesus is the Son of God in the fullest sense of salvation.

3) Note that these twelve were baptized twice. A believer is to be baptized after his conversion—*in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ*. (See Deeper Study #1—Acts 2:38; note—Ephes. 5:18-21. Cp. Romans 8:19; 1 Cor. 6:19; Ephes. 1:13-14, "When you believed, you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.")

2. Salvation necessitates a decision: a person either decides to accept Christ or else he automatically rejects Him. In the case of the audience who heard Paul, many rejected Christ. They just hardened their hearts and refused to believe. For three months Paul preached boldly in the synagogue of the Jews. Note four facts.

a. Paul disputed (*dialegomenos* PWS: 1099) the gospel. The word means to reason, discuss, convince, and answer questions. He discussed the gospel, asking and answering questions, convincing all who were willing to be convinced.

b. He persuaded (*peithōn* PWS: 2921) men of the gospel. (See note—Acts 18:4 for discussion.)

c. Paul's message concerned the Kingdom of God (see Deeper Study #3, Kingdom of God—Matthew 19:23-24 for discussion).

d. Many were hardened and did not believe, being disobedient to the call of God to salvation.

⇒ The word "hardened" (*esklērunonto* PWS: 1865) means to harden like a stone; to be unfeeling and difficult, standing in opposition.

⇒ The words "believed not" (*ēpeithoun* PWS: 345) mean to be disobedient. Take note of this, for rejecting the gospel is not just unbelief. It is much worse: it is disobeying God. God demands that men believe in His Son Jesus Christ. Refusing to believe is outright disobedience, an affront to God, an act of rebellion and hostility against His commandment.

"For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them" (Acts 28:27).

3. Salvation necessitates the protection and growth of new converts. New converts have to be protected and developed. Therefore, when the Jews began to slander Christ and the way of salvation, Paul separated the believers from the synagogue. He secured a lecture hall in a school conducted by a man named Tyrannus. Note two points.

a. Paul took the believers out of the synagogue with him. He began a separate church. Why? Because the synagogue was opposing the truth, threatening the faith and growth of the believers. He had to move out to protect the believers and to assure their growth in Christ. (What courage! What a commitment to the needs of men and to the cause of Christ!)

"He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep" (John 21:17).

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).

"Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me" (Ezekiel 3:17).

b. Paul was a man totally committed to helping believers and to reaching the lost. This is seen in the schedule he kept. People took a siesta between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. because of the heat in that part of the world. (William Barclay. *The Acts of The Apostles*. "The Daily Study Bible." Philadelphia, PA: The Westminister Press, 1956, p.155.) Therefore, Paul...

- worked in secular employment in the morning hours up until 11 a.m. (Acts 20:34; 1 Cor. 14:11-12).
- taught during the hours when Tyrannus was not using the school (11 a.m. - 4 p.m.).
- taught in the homes of believers in the evenings (Acts 20:20-21, 31).

He literally labored for the Lord day and night. All his energy, mind, body and soul were committed to the cause of Christ and His kingdom.

Thought 1. A pointed question that we need to ask ourselves and perhaps of one another is: Have we really given our lives to the Lord? Are we honestly committed to the Lord, laboring day and night?

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:1-2).

"For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. 6:20).

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58).

3. (19:10-20) **Revival**: this passage also presents several important lessons on revival. Note eight points.

1. The Word of the Lord was preached. The Word preached would be the message mentioned earlier, the things concerning the Kingdom of God (Acts 19:8. See Deeper Study #3, Kingdom of Heaven—Matthew 19:23-24 for more discussion.) Paul preached the Word for two years in the school, and note the gospel spread all over Asia (modern day Asia Minor or more particularly, Turkey). Most likely the other six churches mentioned in Rev. 2-3 were founded at this time, as well as Colossae and Hieropolis (Col. 4:13). These facts are known.

⇒ Timothy and Erastus were with Paul at Ephesus, at least for a while (Acts 19:22; Col. 1:1).

⇒ Three well-known leaders of the Colossae church were co-workers with Paul: Epaphras (Col. 1:7; Col. 4:12), Philemon, and Archippus (Col. 4:17; Philemon 1-2).

Apparently, these laymen and others carried the Word throughout all of Asia during these two years. A true revival was taking place because...

- the servants of Christ preached the Word of the Lord, not their own ideas or philosophies.
- the servants of Christ were committed, completely sold out to Him and to the evangelizing of the world.

• the servants of Christ did not just talk about reaching people for Christ; they actually reached out to *all the area*, went everywhere they could.

"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matthew 24:14).

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).

"The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all)" (Acts 10:36).

"For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" (1 Cor. 9:16).

"For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Cor. 4:5).

2. The special miracles of God were seen. Note these were "special miracles" (*dunameis te ou tas tuchousas* PWS: 3687); the phrase actually means two things:

⇒ They were miracles, powers that were not regular happenings; powers that were not the day to day experiences of men.

⇒ They were miracles that were extraordinary; miracles that were usually not seen; that were uncommon; that were usually not performed. Even the disciples had not witnessed such miracles, not on a regular basis.

Apparently what happened was this: Ephesus was a hotbed of the occult including all forms of spiritism, magic, superstition, and the black arts. The people were an emotional lot, sensual and easily moved to feelings and to belief in the magical. From all the evidence, the spectacular was necessary in order to get through to the people. As always, God does everything He can to reach a people. Very simply stated, these "special miracles" show the great love and movement of God toward men. (See note—Acts 2:22-24; note—John 2:23 for more discussion.)

The scene sees Paul working in the tentmaking shop, sweating and having to change his apron and headband (handkerchief) often. People apparently took the clothing to their sick loved ones. In touching the handkerchiefs, the faith of the sick in the God preached by Paul would be lifted to new highs, and God out of mercy would heal them.

As we know (at least down deep within) no piece of cloth or any other material thing has any virtue of its own. Only God has virtue within Himself. Therefore, the healing was done by God, not by Paul nor by a piece of cloth. We who genuinely believe in God must always be honest in dealing with God. Since God is God...

• God has the right and power to do whatever He wills.

• God is love and reaches out to save men in every way possible.

• God knows when a person's faith is true, when a person's faith is really reaching up to be saved wholly, both spiritually and physically.

"But Jesus beheld them and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26).

"For with God nothing shall be impossible" (Luke 1:37).

"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us" (Ephes. 3:20).

3. The false prophets were exposed (Acts 19:13-16). This event graphically demonstrates how God exposes false prophets. Note this:

⇒ Exorcists were common throughout the ancient world. Many were vagabonds, living as strolling gypsies. They lived a circus-type life, making a living off the superstitions of people. They felt that power lay in using the name of God in a formula. Jewish exorcists, of course, used the name of God Himself.

⇒ These exorcists or priests were seven sons of either a Jewish high priest or a man closely connected with the high priestly family.

Note how degenerate and how far the family had forsaken the high calling of God. Priests were called by God to serve His people as priests. (What a warning to every minister of the gospel! He can fall into a terrible degenerate state.)

⇒ These priests used the name of Jesus over a demon-possessed man. The scene was dramatic as the demon used the voice of the man, rebuking the false prophets for using Jesus' name against him. The evil spirit said he knew Jesus and Paul, but *who were they*? And he used the man to assault the false prophets for using the name of Jesus against him.

Now note the point: a true revival, a true movement of God's Spirit, will expose false prophets. False prophets confess Jesus and use His name in their work. But the power is not present, not the kind of power seen in true revival. A true movement of revival witnesses the power of God at work.

4. The fear of God struck men's hearts. They were gripped with a sense of awe and reverence, of God's power and demand for righteousness and of their need to walk righteously before God.

"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28).

"And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear" (1 Peter 1:17).

5. The name of the Lord Jesus was magnified (see Deeper Study #2, Name—Acts 3:6 for discussion).

6. The conversion of many took place. They believed and confessed (see Deeper Study #2, Believe—John 2:24 for discussion).

"Give unto the lord the glory due unto his name; worship the lord in the beauty of holiness" (Psalm 29:2).

"O magnify the lord with me, and let us exalt his name together" (Psalm 34:3).

7. The burning of superstitious books and charms took place. (What an example! What would happen if all the occult and pornographic and harmful books and magazines, pamphlets and papers, pictures and films were destroyed?) Note: they did not sell the items; they burned them. They did not want them in the hands of others because of their lies and degrading influence. Note also the great cost of all the items. A piece of silver was one day's wage, so fifty thousand pieces of silver equalled fifty thousand working days or 137 years.

"And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves" (Matthew 21:12).

8. The Word of God was spread mightily, in strength and power, prevailing and triumphing over all.

"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11).

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16).

"Is not my word like as a fire: saith the lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" (Jeremiah 23:29).