

Apollos has briefly come on the scene; he is 'mighty' in the Old Testament Scriptures and he understands that the Lord Jesus Christ is the promised Messiah but he is lacking in complete knowledge of the New Covenant and the New Birth; his understanding is only as far as to the teaching John the Baptist's *Gospel of Repentance*. It was necessary for Aquila and Priscilla, the first husband and wife ministry team, having been taught and trained by Paul, to bring Apollos to the full understanding of Paul's Gospel of Grace unto Eternal Salvation.

Acts 18:26: *'And he (Apollos) began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. ²⁷ And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace: ²⁸ For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.'*

Acts 19:1 *'And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, ² He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. ³ And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.'*

This may be implying that these disciples whom Paul finds had been taught and brought to faith by Apollos since their response is the same as was Apollos: *'Unto John's baptism.'* John the Baptist's message was: *'Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.'* *'Repent and believe on the One Who is coming; I don't even know Who He is, yet, but I will know, when I see the Holy Spirit descending on Him as a dove!'*

Obviously, none of the Apostles or those whom they had led to faith had led these ones to faith because all those among the original new believers on that Day of Pentecost were fully aware of the Holy Spirit's existence and ministry in every believer's New Birth. Not only had these not received the Holy Spirit's Baptism unto New Birth, they had not even so much as heard of the Holy Spirit's reality.

Verse 4: *'Then said Paul, John (the Baptist) verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.'*

With that, these suddenly realized there was, in reality, so much more than they had known...

Verse 5: *'When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶ And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. ⁷ And all the men were about twelve.'*

If Paul baptized them, had to put his hands on them, putting them down into the water or, perhaps it was Timothy and Silas who baptized these 12 but as soon as Paul touched them, the Holy Spirit came on them and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. I think we can assume that the 'tongues' with which they spoke were languages unknown to themselves but perhaps known to others observing who would have then been amazed by this miraculous sign, confirming what Paul was saying. There is no reason to think that this would have been any different than what happened on that day of Pentecost some years before which further solidifies our understanding of the Book of Acts being a record of the time of transition between the birth of the True Church, at Pentecost, until the receiving of the Holy Spirit's production of His Word of God, written in hard copy through the minds, spirits and hands of the Apostles and Mark and Luke. When the written Word of God is completed with The Revelation of Jesus Christ to John, the need for supernatural, miraculous confirmation of the spoken Word, by the Apostles, will have ceased. That is why Paul wrote: *'Charity(love) never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. ⁹ For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. ¹⁰ But when that which is perfect (God's Word) is come, then that which is in part (miraculous confirmation of the spoken Word) shall be done away. ¹¹ When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. ¹² For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. ¹³ And now abideth faith, hope,*

charity (love), these three; but the greatest of these is charity (love).' 1Cor 13:8

Verse 8: *'And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.'*

For 3 months Paul did what he always did: go first to the Jews and do his best to lead them to faith in their true Messiah...

Verse 9: *'But when divers (Jews) were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus/too'-ran-nos. ¹⁰ And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.'*

Divers means, some; once again, some of the Jews hardened their hearts unto disbelief, speaking evil against the Truth of the Gospel so, rather than wait for them to stir up the city against him again, Paul took the believers with him and set up shop teaching daily in the 'school of Tyrannus.' This is the only mention of Tyrannus; we don't know if he was a believer or what kind of school he ran but he seems to have allowed Paul to teach in his school for 2 years so that the Gospel message went out to all of Asia Minor. This was a monumental advancement of the Gospel and yet we only see its mention in these 2 small verses.

Do you remember back during Paul's previous missionary journey... in chapter 16, just after he had taken Timothy into his group, they were delivering all the letters to the Gentile churches which stated they were not required to be circumcised or to follow the Mosaic Law for which they were all exceedingly glad, Paul wanted to go into Asia to begin evangelizing that huge unreached mission field: *'Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, ⁷ After they were come to Mysia/moo-see'-ah, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.'* Acts 16:6 Paul could have argued with the Holy Spirit; he could have disobeyed, deciding that he knew better; he could have been angry or disappointed but Luke doesn't record anything like that; they simply submitted to God and obeyed, trusting that God's plans were best and so, now we see God's better plan; He caused the Jews to resist so that Paul would leave the synagogue, taking the disciples with him while God provided the school of Tyrannus, free of charge as far as we know, to use for as long as God kept them there so that rather than Paul spending just a little time up in Turkey and then moving on, God kept them there, in Ephesus for 2 whole years so that everyone throughout Asia was exposed to the Gospel and this would then be the strong and healthy church which Timothy would later pastor and that would be the first church of seven to which the Lord Jesus Christ would dictate His letters to John in Revelation chapter 2.

Verse 11: *'And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: ¹² So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.'*

Once again: special, unique miraculous signs from God, given to authenticate and confirm His Word spoken through Paul during this unique time of transition in the early Church between Pentecost and the production of the written Word of God which would be available to every Church and then, eventually, to every Believer.

As much as false teachers, today, would have their foolish followers fill up their bank accounts by emptying their own bank accounts, sending in their life's savings to the address on the TV screen in exchange for handkerchiefs or bottles of anointing oils or any number of other worthless trinkets as points of faith over which the TV charlatan has *prayed the prayer of faith: 'But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. ² And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. ³ And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.'* 2Peter 2:1

Verse 13: *'Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the LORD Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.'*

These vagabond Jews wander about playing at exorcism. First, these are not born again believers; the Holy Spirit does not dwell within them. No demon is cast out by a so-called exorcist. Exorcism is not a legitimate Christian concept; this is the only time the word is found in Scripture. There is only one Power to cast out Satan and that is the Lord Jesus Christ *'He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.'* 1Jn 3:8

The only way a demon leaves a person is when that person is born again; the Holy Spirit enters and then: *'Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.'* 1John 4:4

Many have developed 'ministries' centered on 'casting demons out of Christians' but demons cannot be inside of Christians; they may be on the outside, harassing a believer, lying and convincing a Christian that they are possessed but either the Holy Spirit fills a believer or He doesn't, in which case, that supposed believer is not really a believer at all. These 'ministries' develop intricate convoluted formulas for casting out demons; in fact, many Christians have their own formulas: 'I bind you, Satan, in Jesus' Name!' 'I cast you into the pit of Hell!' 'I plead the blood of Jesus' 'I claim the blood of Jesus!' None of these formulas have any Scriptural foundation; they're just made up magical potions with no effect whatsoever.

Listen to what one foolish minister has written: 'Pleading the blood of Jesus is one of the most effective ways to pray that I have ever learned. When I present the blood of Jesus to Father God in prayer, it's like I can sense a transaction taking place in Heaven. I can feel that I am praying God's will for my life and that I'm giving Him permission to do all the radical things His Word says He wants to do.'

What a vagabond! He's giving God permission! God is so lucky to have found this one!

These vagabond Jews think they've found the right formula for making a quick buck:

'We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.'

Well that's got to give a demon pause... or not...

Verse 14: *'And there were seven sons of one Sceva/skyoo-as', a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so.'*

Sceva, a chief priest has seven sons, a whole gang who are ready to do battle with the demons...

'We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth'... so there!

Verse 15: *'And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?'¹⁶ And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.'*

That had to put a crimp in their fundraising efforts...

One demon possessed man beats up all seven of Sceva's sons; the demon thought he would defeat the Name of Jesus, that he would set back Paul's evangelistic success but once again... Satan and the demons read it all wrong and just the opposite happens; God uses it to further the Gospel again!

Verse 17: *'And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.'*

The evil spirit who beat the seven sons of Sceva made a far worse mistake than he imagined: what he did became known to everyone in Ephesus and fear fell on them all! Jesus Christ was even further magnified which He causes to happen through every work of darkness, maybe not right away but eventually, He will be magnified and glorified throughout all people, events and absolutely all Creation.

Why did an evil spirit, walloping seven Jews cause everyone to be consumed with fear? They'd all seen works of evil spirits before; their entire city was given over to the worship of a powerful evil spirit disguised as the goddess Diana. Why were they fearful to the point of turning to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ... because they realized that this came right on the heels of special, supernatural miracles being accomplished through Paul who was constantly and only preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Here it is: one evil spirit could beat up and strip naked, seven men but just one hanky, simply touched by a

follower of Jesus could cast out any evil spirit! That's why everyone was afraid and anxious to become a follower of the One and Only True God of the Universe!

7 Jews are beaten up by one evil spirit but that one evil spirit is cast out by just one hanky from Jesus Christ! Suddenly the whole city was ready to turn away from evil spirits and unto the Holy Spirit of God, Almighty!

Verse 18: *'And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds. ¹⁹ Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.'*

This is the result of the fear of God falling upon a city: God granted His gifts of Faith and Repentance to many; they believed and couldn't wait to confess their sin and turn from their sin, to turn completely from their sin.

In 1519, Hernán Cortés and his men landed with 11 ships on the Yucatan peninsula in Mexico. His mission was to conquer and occupy the New World for Spain. Cortés did something dramatic; knowing his men would become discouraged and long for home and civilization, he burned, or scuttled, 10 of his ships so that they were truly committed to the mission with no way out and no way back.

Here, in Ephesus, these who are turning to the Lord Jesus Christ are doing something similar. They are publicly confessing their hidden, and not so hidden, sins. They were causing themselves to be shunned by those with whom they had previously sinned; everything was being brought into the Light of the Gospel.

The Greek word for 'curious arts', here: periergos/per-ee'-er-gos, meaning, 'having to do with magical arts'.

Their books of magic spells and sorcery were extremely valuable; this knowledge of interaction with demonic spirits had been gathered and collated over many centuries; demons did not want this library of enslaving willing, or unwilling humans, to be destroyed; and, realize, these books at Ephesus were only a small percentage of such books and libraries all around the World; many are, doubtless, still in existence today.

When these in Ephesus were publicly confessing their sins and destroying their valuable books of sorcery, they were *burning their ships*. Without their books of spells and recipes of potions, they were cutting themselves off from their old lives of sin; the Holy Spirit was inspiring them as He was destroying the works of the devil.

By the way, such is our command: He has conquered; we are to occupy until He comes for us. His conquered territory is wherever we are. Wherever we are, as the light of the World and salt of the Earth, do dispel the darkness and retard the rot... that is conquered territory. We are His representatives of the Way, His Truth and Eternal Life. When we are removed, soon, in the Rapture, deception, darkness, decay, rot and death will rush in to fill the void.

Verse 20: *'So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.'*

Where His new ambassadors established forward bases of operation into enemy territory, the Word of God grew mightily and prevailed over all.

Verse 21: *'After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome. So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season.'*

When Paul was in Macedonia and Achaia, during his previous missionary journey, that was when he knew he must go to Jerusalem and then on to Rome where he would eventually be killed. While still in Ephesus, where this great Work of the Spirit is happening, he decided to stay there for a season and to send Timothy and Erastus back across to Greece and Macedonia.

I had mistakenly said, earlier, that Paul had left Timothy in Ephesus to pastor the church. That has not, yet, been done; Timothy is still being taught and mentored, being still more readied to pastor, by Paul.

Verse 23: *'And the same time there arose no small stir about that way.'*

And here we go again...