

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Acts: The Continuing Earthly Ministry Of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Part VI: The Ministry Of The Universal Church In Its Spread To The Ends Of The Earth, Acts 8:26-28:31

E. Christ's Use Of The Apostle Paul To Spearhead Worldwide Outreach, Acts 14:4-28:31

20. Christ's Use Of Paul's Separation From Verbal Abuse In Discipling

(Acts 19:8-20)

I. Introduction

- A. Scripture in 2 Timothy 3:1-2 predicts that verbal abuse will increase in the latter days of the Church, a problem we see increasing in today's world and even in Christian circles.
- B. However, God expects us to shrink away from it in *holiness* for our sake (2 Timothy 3:5b and *apotrepou* in the middle voice, cf. U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966 ed., p. 735), an action the Apostle Paul applied in his ministry for the sake of the new believers he disciplined in Acts 19:8-9.
- C. Paul's withdrawal from such abuse was blessed of God, a truth applicable to us today (as follows):

II. Christ's Use Of Paul's Separation From Verbal Abuse In Discipling, Acts 19:8-20.

- A. True to his hope in Acts 18:21, Paul was enabled in God's permissive will to return to Ephesus where he spoke boldly for three months, proclaiming the Gospel of Christ in the synagogue there, Acts 19:8.
- B. However, some of the hearers were hardened, not believing the truth, so they began to "speak evil" of the faith before the congregation that met there, Acts 19:9a KJV.
- C. Realizing this situation was not edifying for the new believers who were there, Paul withdrew from the synagogue, separating the new disciples with him, and continued to disciple them daily in the "lecture hall" of Tyrannus. This was a hall likely used to teach rhetoric that was "made available . . . to traveling philosophers or teachers," Acts 19:9; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978 ed., fn. to Acts 19:9.
- D. Paul's ministry in the lecture hall continued for 2 years so that as people came and went from Ephesus from the Asian province, all who lived there heard the Gospel, be they Jews or Greeks, Acts 19:10.
- E. Since Paul had been countered by verbal abuse from unbelieving Jews, God honored his separation from them by performing special miracles that critiqued these critics and spread the Gospel, Acts 19:11-20:
 1. God worked to critique in special miracles the Jewish verbal abusers Paul had faced, Acts 19:11-12:
 - a. The Lord arranged for miracles to be performed in connection with Paul that violated ceremonial restrictions of the Jews, critiquing them, Acts 19:11-12: (1) The Greek word, *simikinthia* in Acts 19:12 were "work aprons" (Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Engl. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 758) apparently discarded by Paul in the city dump due to their worn, soiled conditions. (2) A demon-possessed man or leper had been healed upon touching one of these aprons, leading to people taking cloths that touched Paul to the infirmed to heal them opposite Jewish ceremonial restrictions! (Acts 19:11-12)
 2. When unsaved Jewish exorcists tried to duplicate Paul's supposed "magical" power to exorcise demons only to see their effort backfire, the credibility of Paul and his Gospel became evident, causing the Gospel to spread greatly among the pagan Greeks, Acts 19:13-16, 17-20:
 - a. Some unsaved Jewish exorcists tried to use Paul's supposed "magic" by citing the name of Jesus preached by Paul, but the demon involved claimed he recognized Paul and Jesus, but not them, implying one had to be a true follower of Christ to invoke Christ's name this way, Acts 19:13-15.
 - b. Thereupon, the demon caused the demon-possessed man to overcome, beat and disrobe all seven men of these exorcists, and they fled naked from the building, Acts 19:16.
 - c. The Jews had habitually critiqued the Greeks for competing naked in their athletic events, so news of these seven Jews running naked and wounded out of a building spread all through the Jewish and Greek populace in Ephesus, bringing great respect for Paul and His Gospel, Acts 19:17a, b.
 - d. This led to many more conversions of Jews and pagan Greeks, with the burning of many pagan works on magic, and the spread of the Word of God in that region, Acts 19:18-20!

Lesson: When Paul separated himself and the new converts from verbal abusers of the truth, God worked to COUNTER his critics and SUPPORT the Gospel he preached for the SPREAD of the truth!

Application: (1) May we withdraw from unedifying exposure to verbal abuse that God might bless us! (2) May we leave any damage to our credibility that verbal abuse has created for God Himself to offset!