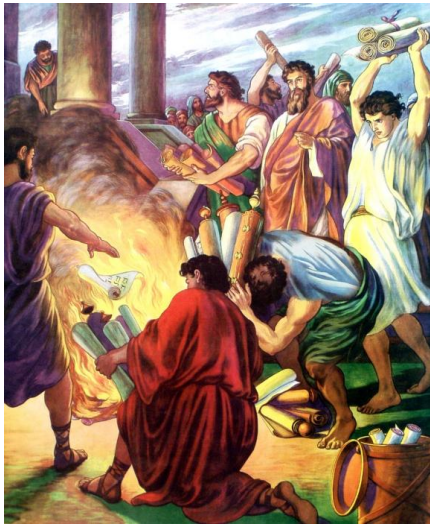


SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 12



IN THE NAME OF JESUS

Scripture Text: Acts 19:13-22

The purity of spiritual life and the power of God were so visible in the Ephesian church that the unsaved desired to imitate.

To sign another's name to a check is forgery and a crime. It is an attempt to obtain the money of another from the bank without depositing one's own money. In our lesson today we learn about exorcists who wished to gain the benefits of Christ without commitment to Him or contact with Him. Their use of His name was forgery. It was taking God's name in vain. It is to His people only that Jesus says, **Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you (John 16:23).**

MEMORY VERSE: *And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?*

—Acts 19:15

DAILY READINGS:

- Mon.—**Luke 4:31-39** Unclean spirits and sickness subject.
- Tue.—**Jude 1:5-23** Doom of false teachers.
- Wed.—**Hebrews 7:15-28** Superiority of Christ's priesthood.
- Thu.—**Ezekiel 33:10-20** The message of righteousness.
- Fri.—**John 10:1-18** Christ the Shepherd of the sheep.

Devotional Reading: Ephesians 6:10-20 Whole armor of God.

Exorcists Use Jesus' Name

Acts 19:13-14 God was using Paul in healing the sick and casting out evil spirits. In Ephesus were **exorcists**—ones who attempt to drive out evil spirits by use of a holy name or by magic rites, or who summon evil spirits by magical formulae. They **took upon them**—assumed without authority—**to call over** demon-possessed people **the name of the Lord Jesus**. They used Christ's name to command His power. Among the exorcists were seven brothers. Their father, Sceva, was a chief priest and should have taught his sons better. Not all who use Jesus' name are His people or have the Truth. To rightly use Jesus' name, we must have contact with God, and must have been born into His family by a new, spiritual birth.

Evil Spirit Answers

Acts 19:15-16 **The evil spirit answered**—the spirit talked, not the man. Not having a body, he used the man's mouth. Evil spirits can live in and control people. Just as God must have our hands, feet, and mouths to use for His work, so does Satan use human instruments to accomplish his work. **Jesus I know, and Paul I know . . .** The devil and his spirits are intelligent and have greater insight than humans have. They knew Jesus (**Luke 4:41**). This one knew Jesus and Paul—probably had been watching and fearing their work. . . . **but who are ye?** He knew the power of Jesus and Paul. These men had none. **The man**, moved by the evil spirit, **leaped on them**, and completely overcame them. The man, demon possessed, was stronger physically than seven men in their own strength.

What was wrong in the action of Sceva's sons? They used Jesus' name against the demon as Paul had done. Why did they fail? (1) Because they had no contact with Jesus. Since He was not present in them, His name was not theirs to use. (2) While they may have appeared to do as Paul, there was a vast difference. It is not the use of

SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 12

the Name, but the power of the Name that avails. They used it as a magic formula after the manner of sorcery. Paul looked to Jesus Himself to do the work.

A Complete Change

Acts 19:17-20 This episode brought fear, action, and salvation. (1) Fear on the whole community—fear of the devil's power, fear of God's almighty and holy power, which stood out in contrast to the weakness of those who lacked Him. Jesus' name was **magnified**. We need more fear of God when His marvelous power is being shown forth. (2) Many believed. (3) They confessed freely, no concealment or excuses for their sins. They **showed their deeds**—the normal action when people believe, repent and confess, and turn from sin. Read **1 John 1:9**. (4) Their new life brought action to clean the outside in harmony with their cleansed hearts. They had been in the same wicked practices as the exorcists, had used **curious arts** —witchcraft. They made a public bonfire of their books of magic. It was a great victory for God and His Word.

That the conversion of these people was genuine was proven by the burning of their books of witchcraft. (1) They did it publicly **before all**. (2) They left no easy path for returning to their sins. (3) They made the break with sin complete. (4) They showed hatred of the sin. They did not keep tokens or mementoes of them. He who finds it hard to live very far from the old sinful ways has never really left them. Note that they completely destroyed the books. They did not sell them and pass the evil on to others. They burned these books for which they had paid large sums of money and gladly marked off the whole transaction as a bad investment.

There is a lesson here on the burning of bad books which the modern generation may well take to heart. There are many books on the market today which should be in the incinerator instead of on the library table. Some of them are books on astrology, spiritualism and other mistaken doctrines by which multitudes are misled. Other books are the sensual and obscene novels which are commended as sophisticated, clever, and realistic. God's way is holiness. If the new convert would be strong, let him follow the example seen here.

Not by Might, Nor by Power

Read **Zechariah 4:6**. An electric motor does not run by strength of the connecting cord, but by the current which runs through it. Being a conductor for the current to pass through, the wire does effective service.

Just the same, the miracles in Ephesus were not done by Paul's strength. He gave himself as a conductor through which the power of God traveled. The sons of Sceva had not yielded to God. They were not God's children nor connected with God. Hence no power of God came through them to drive the demon from the man. All of us in our own strength are powerless (**John 15:5**). Only if we are connected with God can the Spirit work through us to do God's work.

Paul Plans to Move On

Acts 19:21-22 Paul purposed in the spirit—a deep-seated desire in accordance with God's will—to visit churches, working toward Jerusalem, and eventually Rome. Timothy and Erastus, he sent on ahead. The devil is always seeking to destroy us. To stand safe and true, our only hope is to be wearing **the whole armor of God** (**Ephesians 6:11**).

JUST A THOUGHT

**Freedom is not the right to do as you please,
but the liberty to do as you ought.**