

MIME-Version: 1.0 Content-Type: multipart/related; boundary="-----_NextPart_01C7ADCA.E0399E60" This document is a Single File Web Page, also known as a Web Archive file. If you are seeing this message, your browser or editor doesn't support Web Archive files. Please download a browser that supports Web Archive, such as Microsoft Internet Explorer. -----_NextPart_01C7ADCA.E0399E60 Content-Location: file:///C:/CF396912/TheRightUseofPower.htm Content-Transfer-Encoding: quoted-printable Content-Type: text/html; charset="us-ascii"

The Right Use of Power – Acts 19:11-12

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Read Acts 19:8-12

B. Set the Scene

1. = In Acts 20:21 Paul said he spent 3 years in Ephesus, far longer than anywhere else.
2. = He spent no more than a few weeks in some places.
3. = But Ephesus was the gateway to the entire Roman province of Asia, a rich, fertile & well-population region.
 - a. It was the provincial capital with a population of a half million.
 - c. Main highways connected Ephesus to several other large cities.
4. = It was a center of both *trade & religion*, with pilgrims coming from *all over the ancient world* to worship at the temple of Artemis/Diana, one of the 7 *Wonders of the Ancient World*.
 - a. It was 4 times larger than the Parthenon in Athens!
 - b. And so magnificent it dazzled the eye from miles away.
5. = Paul knew a vibrant church in Ephesus would have a profound impact not only on all of Asia, but throughout the Roman Empire . . .
 - a. Because those pilgrims who came to worship Diana would hear the Gospel & be led to faith in Christ,
 - b. Then carry the Faith back to their homes, where like little sparks they would kindle a new blaze –
6. = So after spending 3 months teaching in the Jewish synagogue, Paul realized he'd culled all those who were going to come to Christ.

- a. All that was left were skeptics who's opposition to the Gospel had turned blasphemous.
- b. No longer willing to cast "pearls before swine," Paul left the synagogue and rented a hall where he held daily lessons.
- c. This went on for 2 years during which the church grew *incredibly*, both numerically & spiritually.
 - 1) Imagine sitting under the Apostle Paul *every day* for 2 years!
 - 2) Ephesians, the letter he wrote from Rome a few years later is the most prolific & deep of all his letters.
 - 3) Paul knew they could handle it because of all the time he'd spent there & the truths he'd imparted to them.
- 7. = His strategy to establish a solid work in Ephesus paid off as v. 10 makes clear –
- 8. = The entire province was reached with the Gospel.=
 - a. Churches were planted in many of the surrounding cities. We know of large & influential churches in Colossae, Laodicea, Hierapolis –
 - b. Smyrna, Sardis, Pergamum, Thyatira, & Philadelphia.
 - c. If those sound familiar, it's because 7 of them receive letters from Jesus Himself in Rev. 2 & 3.
- 9. = It's vs. 11 & 12 I want to focus on today, but take careful notice of how vs. 11 & 12 flow from & rest on what we find here.
 - a. Paul saw his ministry & calling as a teacher & preacher,
 - b. Of being faithful as a minister of the Word of God.
 - c. It was as he gave Himself *to that*, that vs. 11 & 12 occurred.
 - d. Paul was so faithful to the Word of God, the Gospel reached all Asia!
 - e. God *demonstrated* His endorsement of Paul's ministry in God's Word *by* what follows.

II. TEXT

A. Vs. 11-12

- 1. = Ephesus was well known, not only as the center of Diana worship, but as a

hub of the occult.

2. = It had so many magicians, sorcerers, & schools of the occult, throughout= the Empire occult texts were known as “Ephesian writings.”

3. = The Ephesians were well acquainted with the spiritual & supernatural.

4. = As they dabbled in the occult, opening a door to the demonic, it paved the way for a plague of possessions.

5. As the next verses make clear, the exorcism business was booming in Ephesus.

6. = Because the Ephesians were familiar with the supernatural, God **upped the ante** by performing miracles through Paul that were **a cut above** in the demonstration of spiritual power.

7. = Luke calls them, “unusual miracles.”

a. The words are humorous in Greek. It’s “Miracles – not of the ordinary-kind.”

b. You have your ordinary, usual miracles; then you have your extraordinary, unusual kind.

c. These miracles = were of the later sort.

8. A miracle is something that **seems to** defy the laws of physics. It’s unexpected precisely because it’s an **undoing** or reversal of the normal course of nature.

9. = And that’s why materialists reject miracles, because they contravene the rules that govern the universe.

a. Where atheists **err** is in thinking that the only laws that govern reality are physical laws.

b. They fail to consider the **spiritual realm** which is **not** subject to the laws of Physics.

c. The spiritual realm is governed by **higher** rules than those that rule the physical realm.

d. While this is a rough analogy, think of the universe of space, time, & matter= as merely the ‘skin’ of **all that’s real**.

1) What we see when we look at one another is our bodies, the skin, which is but the shell we live in.

2) The skin is all most people ever know about us because it’s what they see day

after day.

3) But underneath our skin is a complex system of organs, muscles, bones, vessels, & nerves.

4) Separate & distinct from all that physical stuff is the immaterial part of us we call the personality, the mind, emotions, & will.

5) What a mistake it would be to assume all a person was, was their skin.

e. And so it is with Reality. The Physical Universe is but the skin of all that is.

1) It's what we see; what our senses perceive.

2) It's the realm science is limited to.

f. But behind & above it all is the Spiritual realm which is governed by laws that are higher than physical laws.

10. When God performs a miracle, He doesn't so much break a *physical* law as *apply* a *spiritual* one that supersedes the lesser physical rule.

11. Another analogy might help: In times of extreme national crisis, the Federal Government suspends the Bill of Rights to install what's known as Martial Law.

a. The Bill of Rights is the normal, usual Law of the Land. It governs day to day life and provides the Justice system with its authority.

b. The authors of the Constitution knew a crisis could come they could not foresee, so they wisely included a provision for the imposition of Martial Law to ensure overall public order & safety.

12. In the same way, God occasionally *suspends* physical law to bring a higher spiritual reality to bear.

13. We call it a miracle.

a. But only because we're looking at what's happened from its appearance in the skin of the physical world.

b. If we were to look at it from the spiritual realm, we'd realize that a miracle is just bringing the reality of that higher realm **into view** in the physical.

14. Take careful note here of how Luke words this in v. 11 –

“God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul.” <= o:p>

a. Who worked the miracles? GOD!

- b. Did Paul work them? No – God worked = them! He effected them.
- c. God was the power & will behind the miracle;
- d. Paul was merely the agent through which God worked.
- e. File that away; we'll come back to it later.

B. The Miracles

1. = Some of the miracles were effected through Paul laying his hands on people.
2. = Others were done at a distance, when his handkerchiefs & aprons were laid on people.
3. Okay, let's admit it, this is just plain bizarre! What's going on here?
4. = In order to understand why Paul's clothes became the means of healing & deliverance, we need to understand the situation in Ephesus.
5. = As I said, the occult was big business there. It was one of Ephesus' major industries.
 - a. There were dozens of occult schools.
 - b. Several well-known sorcerer-magicians & instructors in occult arts lived & worked there.
 - c. Because they were *celebrities* who commanded immense respect & had grown incredibly rich off their celebrity, they'd become *inordinately* proud; = arrogant is a better description.
 - d. The sorcerers *vied* with each other for prestige, competing for fame because it affected income & gave them bragging rights.
 - e. Popularity was determined by the size of the audience, the number of one's students & how loyal they were. [The Prestige]
 - f. **Power** was a big deal to these guys – *the main thing*, really.
 - 1) The magic they performed was understood as the manipulation of *spiritual power*.
 - 2) To be a magician-sorcerer in Ephesus was to be on a massive, megalomaniacal Power trip!
6. = Into this scene steps Paul who spends 3 months in the synagogue, teaching the Word of God and culling dozens of students.

- a. Then he rents a hall & holds daily classes – all for free! The crowds = pack in.
 - b. 2 years later he's grown his school to thousands who start other schools of the Gospel throughout the region.
 - c. And the miracles taking place are so many & amazing, it's blowing everyone's minds.
 - d. What the occultists couldn't understand is, even though Paul had *the best show in town*, he wasn't charging for it!
 - e. He was *giving his stuff away* to any & all.
7. = The sorcerers were baffled! Why, Paul could have been RICH & commanded his followers like the Emperor of Rome.
8. = Instead, he made tents!
- a. When he first arrived in Ephesus, he found his previous employers, Aquila & Priscilla & got his old job back.
 - b. His home sending church at Antioch wasn't wiring monthly support to his checking account in the First Bank of Ephesus.
 - c. He supported himself and the needs of his ministry team by the sweat of his brow & work of his hands.
 - d. That's where the handkerchiefs & aprons came from.
- 1) 'Handkerchief' is a poor translation – it was a headband, a sweat rag; a piece of cloth you twisted & tie around your head to hold your hair & keep the sweat from getting in your eyes; like a bandana.
- 2) The apron was just that; a thick linen smock you wore over your clothes to keep them from getting dirty.
9. = As Paul made tents, these were useful to his work.
- a. But when the day was done, he took them off & left them behind.
 - b. One day, someone saw them lying there, knew they'd been worn by Paul who was being used so powerfully by God, & took them, probably as mementos – hoping they held some residual power.
 - c. Carried home to a sick relative/friend, they became a point of release for faith & the Spirit of God bestowed healing.
 - d. It didn't take long for word to get out & soon Paul's sweat-rags & aprons

became sought after.

10. Luke *admits* this was unusual, not the typical way = God healed.

11. So what's going on here? Just this: The arrogant Sorcerers-Magicians *disdained* common labor & vied with one another for prestige & power. But Paul, whose power surpassed them all, *labored* each day as a *humble worker*, making tents.

- a. He was a commoner with no ambition for prestige.
- b. Sweat rags & aprons were emblems of his = love for God & the people he was ministering to, rather than tools to advance his fame & fortune.
- c. He wasn't in Ephesus to sell power, he was there to give it away.
- d. He was motivated by love, not greed.
- e. Sweat rags & aprons communicate that better than anything.

12. God allowed Paul's work clothes to be the means of healing & deliverance because it revealed the true nature of God's power.

- a. It works by love - not force or manipulation, which is what all worldly power is about.
- b. This is why I have such a hard time with so much of the healing we see on TV & at so many big events today.

1) The healing crusades & amp; miracles meetings. The Signs & Wonders = *conferences*.

2) When I was a young believer in OC, I went to lots of these events.

- a) For the most part, they were nothing but staged shows -
- b) Slick presentations that used the miraculous as a platform to promote someone's ambition to be a *religious star*.
- c) Power wasn't used = humbly or in such a way as to give glory to God -
- d) It was a means to promote the showman, er, I mean *healer*.
- e) There was no love or humility on the part of the religious celebrity who strutted back & forth like a rock star at a concert.
- f) He played the audience = like a maestro conducting an orchestra,
- g) Working on their emotions, taking advantage of their desperation for a touch

from God.

13. Listen-There was nothing inherently special about Paul's sweat drenched head-bands or dirty aprons.

14. They just stood in *stark contrast* with the sorcerer's arrogant lust for prestige & revealed the fundamental difference between Paul's & their *use of power*.

15. They used it to promote their glory; Paul used it to promote God's.

16. And that's precisely **WHY** the Spirit was so free to bestow *through him* such incredible displays of the miraculous.

17. I never cease to marvel at the religious hucksters who *use this passage* as justification for ripping off the vulnerable.

a. The hanky letter.

b. No evil oil

c. Anointed stones

d. The Glove

e. The Shadow

f. The Hand

g. One business has an entire catalog of this stuff, including . . .

1) = St. Joseph Prosperity Beans

2) St. Theresa Rose Petals

3) Our Lady of the Praies = Wheat

4) Precious Blood Stamps

5) Anointed rocks, complete with instructions'

6) Holy Water in a convenient spray bottle

7) Blessed slat

8) They even have package = deals – like this one; their Spiritual Warfare Package includes –

· = ; = Holy water w/special exorcism blessing

- = ; = Holy water in spray bottle
- = ; = Anointed Rocks
- = ; = Green Scapular
- = ; = St. Michael Chaplet
- = ; = Relic tea light
- = ; = St. Michael Prayer cloth
- = ; = Exorcism salt
- = ; = Holy Relic oil & matching teak incense burner
- Oh, and Free shipping - All this for only \$1= 49.

18. There *wasn't any virtue* in Paul's clothes.

19. They' = d simply become something that allowed people to relea= se their faith to God for a specific need.

20. Let me use = an illustration - In Matthew 9 we're told about a woman who'd had = an ailment for many years.

- a. She spent her savings on medical treatment but to no avail.
- b. When she heard Jesus was passing by she said to herself, "If I could just = touch the tassels of His tallit [prayer shawl], I'd be healed."
- c. So she pressed through the crowd, reached down & brushed her fingers agasi= nt them. Her healing was instantaneous!
- d. Jesus turned & said, "Who touched Me?&= nbsp; For power has gone out from Me."
- e. The disciples were incredulous; t= he crowd was pressing all around Him.
- f. But Jesus said, "No! Someone touched Me with faith!"
- g. There was nothing *inherently powerful* in the tassels, or everyone who touched them would have been he= aled.
- h. It was the *woman's faith in Jesus* that was the critical issue. <= /p>
- i. That faith had set an exp= ectionation of receiving *when* she touched the tassels o= f His tallit.

j. Jesus said to her, “Go your way, your faith has made you whole.”

21. Faith for a specific need often needs a *point of contact* in order to be released.

a. The point of contact doesn't have any power in & of itself;

b. It's just that in that person's mind & heart, *faith becomes finally & fully focused at a given point*.

22. And that's why, though there's a lot of religious hucksters out there using the gullible to enrich themselves, in His great grace, God still touches the needy & desperate who go to their meetings.

a. They go with an expectation of receiving from God

b. And in His love, despite all the stages shenanigans, He gives them what they need.

23. But I wouldn't want to be in those guys' shoes when they stand before God to give account for taking credit for His grace & power, using it to promote & enrich themselves!

III. CONCLUSION

A. *Imitating Christ*

1. As we end, consider how like Jesus Paul was there in Ephesus.

2. Jesus, the all-powerful creator God, emptied Himself, became a servant & lived among us.

a. Though He was the Greatest of All, He humbled Himself & took the lowest place –

b. Washing feet, then, in the *ultimate* act of humility, going to the cross.

c. The power of Christ is infinite, yet loving service shaped everything He did & said.

3. In Ephesus, Paul's imitation of Jesus was sterling; no, even more – it was **GOLDEN!**

a. Though an Apostle, he worked making tents for his support.

b. Though uniquely gifted & anointed to preach & teach, he performed his ministry as a servant, not celebrity.

c. Though he possessed unrivalled power that had all Ephesus buzzing with

excitement, he bestowed it freely upon any who had need.

4. = Truly, Paul was about as like Christ at this time as he could have been: Devoted to the Word of God, Serving faithfully, Using power humbly.

5. = He was living Gal 2:20 & that's why God found him a *safe vessel* through which to work so powerfully.

B. Us

1. = God hasn't changed & His power hasn't dimmed.

2. = Last time I checked, people were still lost, still sick, & still being harassed by evil.

3. = So the Gospel, & healing & deliverance are still very much in need!

4. = God hasn't sent angels to preach & heal. He's sent us.

5. = Let's follow Paul's example. As he said when writing to the Corinthians, a letter he wrote *at this time* in Ephesus, "**Imitate** me, as I'm imitating Christ." [1 Cor. 11:1]

C. God Still Heals!

1. = God Still heals! Nothing's changed on that side of things.

2. = What needs changing is our outlook on healing.

3. = Don't let the religious hucksters & shenanagizers frame your view of healing & the demonstration of spiritual power.

4. = THIS! [The Word] Must shape our understanding & practice.

5. = And Paul urges us – "**Imitate me, as I imitate Christ.**" So, let's do it – Now! =

-----=_NextPart_01C7ADCA.E0399E60 Content-Location:
file:///C:/CF396912/TheRightUseofPower_files/header.htm Content-Transfer-
Encoding: quoted-printable Content-Type: text/html; charset="us-ascii"

Feed My Sheep

-----=_NextPart_01C7ADCA.E0399E60 Content-Location:
file:///C:/CF396912/TheRightUseofPower_files/filelist.xml Content-Transfer-
Encoding: quoted-printable Content-Type: text/xml; charset="utf-8" -----
=_NextPart_01C7ADCA.E0399E60--