

Discerning the Spirits

1. Was this Paul's first trip to Ephesus (see Acts 18:19-21)?
2. Read Acts 16:6. On his second missionary journey, Paul wanted to preach the gospel to the people in the Roman province of Asia but he was forbidden by the Holy Spirit. No doubt Paul was excited when he realized that God finally did want him to minister to the people of Asia. Why did God "forbid" Paul the first time and then allow him the second time?
3. Who had ministered in Ephesus prior to Paul's arrival there?
4. The apostle Paul entered the synagogue and continued to speak out boldly for three months (19:8). When the Ephesian Jews rejected the truth, Paul withdrew and took his new disciples to the school of Tyrannus (note that most Biblical scholars believe Tyrannus was a local philosopher of some notoriety). For a period of two years, Paul taught these disciples daily (v. 9).
 - a. What were the results of Paul's teaching ministry (v. 10)?
 - b. At least eight New Testament churches were probably started during these two years. Can you list them?
5. Ephesus was a city given over to idolatry and sorcery. Some Jews had become involved in these evil practices including the seven sons of a Jewish chief priest named Sceva (v. 13,14).
 - a. What happened when these men attempted to use the name of Jesus like a magic charm (v. 15,16)?
 - b. Can you site any passage of Scripture that gives Christians the authority to cast out demons?
 - c. Can you site any instructions in the New Testament epistles for the casting out of demons or the binding of Satan?
 - d. What happened when people saw the difference between the work of God and the work of Satan (v. 17-20)?
6. Read II Cor. 10:3-5. How does Paul characterize spiritual warfare in these verses?
7. The new believers in Ephesus wisely made a clean break with their past by burning occult objects from their old life before Christ (v. 18-20). (Note this event was not unlike baptism in that it was a clear demonstration for all to see that they were new in Christ). Are you hanging on to anything from your past that may be hampering your walk with the Lord? Is there anything in your life you need to "burn"?

¹And it happened, while Apollus was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples ²he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" So they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." ³And he said to them, "Into what then were you baptized?" So they said, "Into John's baptism." ⁴Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." ⁵When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. ⁷Now the men were about twelve in all. ⁸And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God. ⁹But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. ¹⁰And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. ¹¹Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, ¹²so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them. ¹³Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches." ¹⁴Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so. ¹⁵And the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?" ¹⁶Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. ¹⁷This became known both to all Jews and Greeks dwelling in Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. ¹⁸And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. ¹⁹Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totaled fifty thousand pieces of silver. ²⁰So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.

Read: John 12:1-19

Monday

v. 1,2 — *Six days before the Passover...* Why did Jesus go to Jerusalem during the Passover? Was He just being a good Jewish boy (obeying the Law by attending the festival)? Read I Corinthians 5:7; what does Paul call Jesus? The Passover was given to the Jews as a picture of what Christ would do; Jesus went to the cross during Passover because He was the final Passover Lamb. See Exodus 12 and Numbers 9 for further study.

Tuesday

v. 3-8 — Mary and Judas had radically differing opinions of who Jesus is. Both of them showed, by their actions, the thoughts and intents of their hearts. What do you think motivated Mary? What does verse 6 say motivated Judas? How does your view of who Jesus is affect the way you think and live?

Wednesday

v. 9-11 — The hard hearts of the priests showed yet again as they, "plotted to put Lazarus to death." Do you think Lazarus was afraid of death? It amazes me that the priests were so blinded by their own greed, lust and hatred that they were unmoved by the fact that Lazarus had been RAISED FROM THE DEAD! Read the account in John 11:32-46; note that verse 46 says that even some of the eyewitnesses of Lazarus' resurrection still did not believe! Jesus' words from Luke 16:31 ring ever true: "If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead."

Thursday

v. 12, 13 — The multitude here is quoting Psalm 118:25 and 26. The word "hosanna" used here is not actually a word of praise but an imperative supplication which means "save now" or "save now we pray." The people were expressing praise and joy but at the same time they were confessing that they needed a Savior. What kind of a "Savior" do you think they wanted this time (see the last line of v. 13)?

Friday

v. 14-16 — The Old Testament is filled with references to the coming Messiah. In verse 15, John quotes Zechariah 9:9, one of the many Messianic prophecies that Jesus would fulfill. Jesus came to Jerusalem to fulfill the sovereign will of God: to die on the cross of Calvary for the sins of all mankind as clearly foretold by the prophets. Yet, "His disciples did not understand." Peter even rebuked Jesus when He told the disciples He had to die (Matt. 16:22). At this time, the disciples had a wrong idea about who Jesus is. There are people all around the world who will meet in "Christian" churches this week with an errant view of who Jesus is. Many of them will die in their sins as a result. Take the opportunity this week and next to share the real Jesus with those people that God places into your path.

Saturday

v. 17-19 — The Pharisees viewed Jesus as a religious rival; they were upset because of His popularity (v. 19). The people wanted to see Jesus because they had heard He did some sign. Read John 2:23-25 to see what Jesus thought about the opinions of men. People today have a lot of different ideas about who Jesus is; a good moral man, a good teacher, a religious leader, some even (blindly) claim that He is a myth. The Bible is clear that just over 2,000 years ago *today*, He arrived in Bethany (v. 1) and would triumphantly enter the streets of Jerusalem as their Messiah and King. Because their unbelief (a wrong idea of who Jesus is), the Jews would put to death the Son of God.
