

RUSSELL SANDERS

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THE APOSTLE PAUL – LESSON 35

SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY – PART 21

SCEVA AND SONS

The revival led by Paul was held in the lecture hall of Tyrannus' school which adjoined to the Jewish Synagogue. The Jews of the synagogue had rejected Paul, but they could witness all the miracles of healings and exorcism of demon spirits. (Acts 19:12-17.)

A chief priest of that synagogue was a Jew named Sceva who also had seven sons who served there. These men and probably some others were called (v. 13) "vagabond" Jews who dabbled in the mystical (magical/witchcraft) arts of exorcism and spiritism. The "mystical arts" had incantations and procedures meant to deal with spirits.

When Sceva and his sons saw that Paul could cast out evil spirits by the name of Jesus alone, they figured they could do it also. It was much simpler than their mystical (witchcraft) techniques and much more effective.

They took it upon themselves to call those with an evil spirit (or who thought they did) to come to them. One man showed up who was truly demon possessed. They spoke to him (and might have laid hands on him) and said (v. 13), ***"We adjure you by Jesus who Paul preacheth"*** to come out. It did not work. In fact, it backfired on them because they had no personal relationship with Jesus.

The demon in the man answered them (v. 15), ***"Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are you?"*** The demon knew they had no authority, but he was angry that they were so bold and foolish as to try to cast him out of the man. The demon in the man reacted violently against the sons of Sceva. He jumped on them, beat up all of them, and even stripped the clothes off them. They ran out naked and with injuries. Word of this spread all over Ephesus. Fear fell upon many. The name of the Lord Jesus was greatly magnified. Many believed and confessed Jesus as Lord. Many revealed the evil deeds they had done. This spurred a serious revival in Ephesus. The word of God grew mightily (v. 20).

Many that were into "curious arts" (magic/witchcraft) brought their magical books and had a large public burning. The value of all these wicked books was about fifty thousand pieces of silver. They desired to "come clean" of all of it.

What would be today's value of 50,000 pieces of silver? We do not know the size or weight of a piece of silver money in their day. I can only illustrate what we have today. If I were to have 50,000 U.S. silver eagles of one ounce each at the current value of \$25 an ounce, it would be 1,250,000 dollars. That is one and a quarter million dollars folks.

By the way, if you are born again, spirit filled, and living a godly pure life, you have the authority through the name of Jesus like Paul did to cast out demons. Yes, I said YOU!