

Proclaiming the Gospel

Message
of
Jesus Christ

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness;
But unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1.18).

Edifying the Body of Christ (Eph. 4.10-16)

March, 2017

The Wise Still Seek Him

Vol. IX.03

The Word of God Prevailed!

Man has always wanted power and control and

It was **not** man's power and control that grew and prevailed; "So mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed" (Acts 19.20). God in Christ Jesus is still on the throne! There are times when people thought they were in control following Satan, while those hiding behind the pulpit while standing on a pulpitum (stage) giving forth a false word encouraging people on that road. The Word of God makes it clear that the Lord God Almighty in Christ Jesus is still on the throne (Rev 7.10-15)!

Open the Word to Acts 19.20 to experience the Word of God when ". . . mightily grew **the Word of God and prevailed;**" the Word of God has stirred men's hearts all through history. That great cloud of witnesses has given forth the Word through the centuries for those who hunger and thirst for righteousness and for the holiness of the Lord God, and who live that Word as they preach it with their lives as well as with words.

Yes, some of us have seen great moves of the Lord God in Christ Jesus by His Holy Spirit. We have seen how that the Word of God comes in might and power and prevails regardless of our ability or inability to hear and see, to experience the Word of God; and some of God's people have a yearning in their hearts to see the Word of God grow mightily and prevail – again, today.

There are those who are counterfeit – standing behind the pulpit, and they have followers in numbers beyond counting. Their lives are full of evil. But know God is still on the throne, and their kingdoms will not stand "When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder;" their counterfeit lives may fool man, but **not** the Lord God (Ps 103.19).

"So mightily grew the Word of God and **prevailed**" makes clear how lives were and are transformed for the glory of the Lord, how lives can be changed! Let us be clear that the majority may go with Satan (Mt 7.13) but **THE WORD OF GOD PREVAILS** and **THE TRUTH OF THE LORD GOD WILL STAND AND STAND STRONG in the midst of the sinfulness** and rejection. There are those who have stood, are standing, and will stand strong with the Word of God in them, regardless of the work of the enemy – as we read in Acts 19.

Prevail means "to have power," "to be strong." No matter how vile the world becomes, how sinful, how disobedient to the Lord God Almighty, the Word of God

persecution soon facing all Christians, we will either surrender to God completely, or we will find ourselves unable to endure what the enemy uses against us. Human strength will **NOT** endure what we will face. Only the strength and fortitude given by the indwelling Holy Spirit will enable one who has led a life of surrender to the Lord to endure the persecution without denying our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Let us seek the Lord that we might have **HIS** strength and power **PREVAILING** in us for His glory to reach a lost and dying world that they, like those in Acts, shall come to know the Word of God, the Living Word, Jesus Christ, and the written Word, the Holy Bible, that they shall know the **power** of the Word of God in their lives (Heb 4.12; I Th 2.13; II Ti 2.9) and that it shall **prevail** in them (Acts 6.7; 12.24; 19.20).

"So mightily grew the Word of God and **prevailed**."

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Co-laborers together for Jesus Christ

Come apart and rest (Mark 6.31).

prevails. Our God reigns; He has already won the victory (Ps 98.1; Isa 25.8; I Cor 15.57; I Jn 5.4; Rev 15)! The Word of God prevailing is not determined by the majority whose ears may be deafened, their eyes dimmed, and their hearts hardened to the Lord Jesus Christ and His call to holiness.

The Word of God is the written Word, the Holy Bible, which embodies the words of the Lord, as well as His Word to us through His followers who are part of that great cloud of witnesses so long ago (Heb 12.1). Also, Jesus Christ is the living Word that came so long ago and continues coming to us (Jn 1.1, 14).

"So mightily grew the Word of God and **prevailed**." The most powerful time of which we have written record of the work of the Holy Spirit and the prevailing of the Word of God is recorded in the Book of Acts – through resistance, through persecution, and every effort to stop it.

What takes place when the Lord begins to make His Word come alive in our hearts? Let us look at Acts 19. The first seven verses tell us there were already about 12 disciples in Ephesus when Paul arrived. They had heard John's gospel of repentance and believed, but their understanding was limited. When Paul told them about Jesus, they were baptized and, upon the laying on of Paul's hands, were filled with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was beginning a work in Ephesus beyond what the people had experienced before.

Satan quickly resisted what God was doing. In the first three months of Paul's ministry in the temple, some of the people's hearts were hardened, and they began to speak evil of the message of Jesus (Acts 19.9).

Should Paul stay in the temple to try to persuade the people? No. He knew they did not believe in Jesus Christ and that they opposed his preaching. Paul simply moved the believers to the school of Tyrannus and continued teaching for two years with the anointing of the Lord God in Christ Jesus (Acts 19.9). Many miracles were wrought through Paul by the hand of God in Christ Jesus, and all of those in Asia heard the Word of the Lord. Many were healed, and the evil spirits departed from people when handkerchiefs and aprons from Paul's body were given to them (Acts 19.11,12; see also: Mk 16.15-17; Lk 4.18; Jn 9.11; Ja 5.14).

Let us see in Paul's action an example for us. When Satan raised up resistance to the gospel, Paul moved the believers away from the temple where they might have become discouraged; he then continued doing the Lord's work. Nothing could stop Paul from doing what God had called him to do.

In Paul's day, Christians were tortured and martyred. When one committed his life to Jesus, he knew what he faced. He was not committed to a "feel good" *gospel*; he was committed to the Lord Jesus Christ – One Who loved him enough to die on a cruel cross for his sins.

A watered down gospel, a self-centered gospel, or one teaching that God wants to give us whatever we desire and a life of ease, will damn our souls. Jesus taught that if we would be His disciples, we must take up our cross and follow Him (Mt

16.24). This will bring us to full surrender to God's will to whatever the Lord Jesus Christ calls us – a life of self-denial and death to selfish desires.

Let us look at verses 13-20. Some people believe they can accomplish the Lord's work in their own strength. If only they could use a "magic formula" that they believe a true servant of the Lord is using, they should see the same results. Right? WRONG! "If we resist the devil by faith in Christ, he will flee from us; but if we think to resist him by the using of Christ's name, or his works, as a spell or charm, Satan will prevail against us" (Henry: Concise Commentary, Acts 19.13-20). They did not know that the counterfeit has **not** the power of God. The sons of Sceva did not realize that the results from the Lord come from a life dedicated to the Lord – time spent with the Lord in prayer and in His Word, living for Jesus Christ.

Satan can influence one to repeat the "correct" words, arrange the "correct" circumstances, **but the power of God will not be there**. Satan always produces a counterfeit for what God is doing; it produces wrong results. Even if the results look right, they are wrong (II Cor 11:13-15).

The sons of Sceva knew that calling on the Name of Jesus worked for Paul, so why should it not work for them? The evil spirit knew Jesus and Paul, but the sons of Sceva did not know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior as did Paul (Acts 19.15, 16).

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

And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

The sons of Sceva did not have the strength to withstand the attack of the enemy; instead, they fled from the building naked and injured.

The people had seen the sons of Sceva – seven of them – defeated by **one** demon possessed man. It became known to all Jews and Greeks in Ephesus. ". . . and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified" (Acts 19.17). The people had witnessed the feeble results of the counterfeit; but, they had also experienced the mighty power of the Word of the Lord – as Paul, used mightily by the Lord, spoke in the Name of Jesus.

The Word of God increased in such strength and power as to cast down the power of the enemy (Acts 19.17). People whose lives had been involved in witchcraft and "curious arts," who had even made their livelihood by the use of such, found themselves turning from their evil ways. Their hearts were so changed and cleansed that they destroyed their materials, their books, showing by their action their complete separation from that lifestyle into which they had been so drawn (Acts 19.18, 19).

Let us stand firm in our commitment to God and His calling upon our lives. We are living in a day when the Word of God is **not** known by most people. God is calling us, those who truly love and serve Him, to a total surrender to Him. With