

Who Are You?

by Linville Dunaway, Corinth Christian Church

"Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?" Acts 19:13-15.

You can watch someone who has a great ability do something and he makes it look so easy. However when the unlearned person tries to do the same thing it is not easy at all and can't be done with the same results. Those who witnessed the apostles perform miracles must have thought that it was easy to do. They called on the name of Jesus and for a person to be healed, or an unclean spirit to be cast out of a person and it was done to the glory of God. Easy, right? The people who saw these things happen thought so.

These seven sons of Sceva, the priest, sure thought that it would be easy to say the same thing that Paul, or one of the other apostles, said and they would get the same results. Their thinking was that it was some sort of magic and they just needed to say the same words and call on the same person and it couldn't fail. Perhaps they

intended to make money doing these things, but whatever their reason, it was not to serve God. There were many in Ephesus who practiced magic and some of the Jews tried it too.

This appears to be the first time that these seven brothers attempted to cast out an evil spirit trying to imitate Paul. It is evident that they have no knowledge of Jesus and of the faith in Christ that was in Paul and the other apostles. These men just thought that by using the name of Jesus that was all that was required to make the evil spirit flee. Notice the way they worded their "Commands" to the spirit. We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. If they had been believers living for God and trusting in Jesus they would not have felt it necessary to mention Paul. They didn't know Jesus and only knew of Paul.

Yes, they used the name of Jesus, but it was without power for they had no faith in the Lord. All they were doing was saying words that for them had no power to command the unclean spirit. The spirit answered them saying, Jesus I know. Yes they definitely knew that Jesus is the son of God and had authority over them. Then he said, "And Paul, I know." He knew that Paul was a child of God and was full of the Holy Spirit. The Bible says that the Lord knows them that are his and you can believe that the evil spirits know them that belong to the Lord too.

Then the spirit asked the very important question,

"But who are you?" It is not recorded in the scriptures that they tried to give an answer as to who they were. What could they have said if they had? "We are trying to use the name of Jesus like Paul did," might be what they would have said. They may not have had the chance to even try to answer for the spirit leaped on them and beat all seven of them. They fled the house naked and wounded, thankful to escape with their lives. They learned a hard lesson that day. Now they knew that it wasn't enough to say the name of Jesus and that to have power a person had to have faith. They had neither and because of this they failed to cast out the evil spirit.

Who are you, the spirit asked the brothers. That might be a good question for us to think on today, just who are we? Are we people like Paul who believe in the Lord and live for him, seeking his will and not our own? That is why Paul had power, he had faith and obedience. A person told me years ago that he would like to do the things that Paul did. I told him that he would have to have the faith and obedience that Paul did.

Are we like the seven brothers who learned the hard way that talking about Jesus was not the same as knowing him and talking to him. If we only talk about the Lord and never really come to trust in him and to walk with him are we any different from the brothers who tried to use his name for their own purpose? He knows them that are his, does he know us?

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This is a dramatized version of facts taken from the Book of I Samuel intending to show some of the customs of these ancient and traditional times

SAMUEL AND SAUL
SAMUEL HAS HONORED SAUL AT A FEAST, MUCH TO SAUL'S SURPRISE FOR HE DOES NOT KNOW THAT THE LORD HAS PICKED HIM TO RULE ISRAEL, NOW

...SAMUEL COMMUNES WITH SAUL ON THE ROOF OF HIS HOUSE...

UP THAT I MAY SEND THEE AWAY!

...AS THEY APPROACH THE GATES AT THE END OF THE CITY...

BID THY SERVANT GO BEFORE US, BUT STAND THOU STILL...

...THAT I MAY SHOW THEE THE WORD OF THE LORD!

...AND SAMUEL ANOINTS SAUL WITH OIL, AND MAKES MANY PROPHECIES CONCERNING SAUL'S JOURNEY BACK HOME, ALL WHICH WILL PROVE THAT SAUL IS OBTAINED OF GOD!

THOU SHALT FIND TWO MEN BY RACHEL'S TOMB WHO WILL TELL THEE OF THY FATHER'S LOST ANIMALS - AND THREE MEN AT BETHEL WHO WILL GIVE THEE TWO LOAVES OF BREAD...

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