

Fact Sheet for “The Increase”
Acts 19:11-20

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ESV 11 ¶ And God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, ¹² so that even handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his skin were carried away to the sick, and their diseases left them and the evil spirits came out of them.

There is no reference in this passage to these miracles being done through anyone else but Paul.

And... we have not seen Paul do similar miracles every place he went.

God chose, in this time and in this place, to work these miracles through Paul.

God clearly did this so that there would be supernatural validation of Paul's teaching and preaching to the people in this city.

There was nothing special about these handkerchiefs. Paul touching them did not give these pieces of cloth any special power. It was only a way God chose to validate the Paul's message.

God chose to work differently in Ephesus than he did in other places.

Even today we do not see God working the same way in every place.

Here's another question. How do you know the difference between a disease that is due to natural causes and a disease or infirmity that is caused by being possessed by an evil spirit?

I don't know, but God does.

¹³ Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists undertook to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul proclaims."

These Jewish exorcists were not Christians. They were only trying to tie into the miraculous power that Paul was using to cast demons out of people.

¹⁴ Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this.

"a Jewish high priest"???

¹⁵ But the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?"

This would have been through the voice of the one possessed.

¹⁶ And the man in whom was the evil spirit leaped on them, mastered all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

Obviously empowered by the evil spirit

¹⁷ And this became known to all the residents of Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks. And fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was extolled.

What these Jewish exorcists were trying to do even helped validate Paul's message as being from God.

¹⁸ Also many of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices.

Now that many of those who heard Paul's message had become Christians, and were indwelt by the Holy Spirit, they began confessing their former practices that were sinful.

¹⁹ And a number of those who had practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver.

Is magic sinful or evil? This was not sleight of hand, misdirection, and dexterity. This would be more considered as dark magic.

Today... Astrology (not astronomy), Palm readers, Tarot cards, Séances, Astral projection, Remote viewing, Ouija Boards, Voodoo...

These materials represented a huge \$ amount

Whenever we strive to get close to God we become very aware of our sins.

²⁰ So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily.

This was God's reason for those miracles in that place, at that time. This increase was not only numbers who were saved, but also in choices to live holy lives.

I made an earlier comment. Even today we do not see God working the same way in every place.

With a quick look you could say that different people groups are differently open to the Christian message, and explain the gospel's impact in purely naturalistic terms.

But when you listen to the stories missionaries and pastors tell, or the testimony of other Christians, or even review you own life you can see God working supernaturally behind the scenes today bringing people to Christ.

But also remember that as you get closer to God you will have more and more of a desire to become more holy.