

Katamares: Acts: 19:11-22.

19:12 Aprons Carried from Paul's Body to the Sick

The Greatest Proof of the Resurrection.

Chrysostom: What Christ is saying is this, "Whoever believes in me will, in my name, do greater signs than I have done." ¹ And these are the greater signs that they did: their shadows raised the dead. Thus was the power of Christ especially proclaimed, since it was not so marvelous that he performed miracles while living, as it was that, when he had died, others were able to do greater than [Christ] in his own name. This itself was the most irrefutable demonstration of the resurrection. He would not, even had he been seen, have been believed to such an extent, since they could have said that he was a phantasm, but should someone see greater signs occur from the mere mention of his name—even when he was among humankind in the flesh—that one, unless terribly shameless, would not have refused to believe. Catena on the Acts of the Apostles 19.11–12.²

19:13 Pronouncing the Name of Jesus

The Name Has Power Only When Spoken by Faith.

Chrysostom: Look, they had no intention to believe but wished to cast out demons by the name.... Therefore in secret they did this, but their weakness was then paraded in public.... So the name has no power unless it is spoken by faith.... Look how they turned their weapons against themselves.... So far were they from thinking of Jesus as something great that they added Paul as well, because they thought that he was something great here. One may justly wonder at this point why the demon did not cooperate with the exorcists' deception but refuted them completely and exposed their stage act. It seems to me that he was very angry, just as if he were someone in the gravest danger, who is being refuted by a pitiful wretch and wants to vent all his rage against him. For, to prevent any slight on the name of Jesus, he first acknowledges him and takes this acknowledgment as permission. Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles 41.³

The Demon Is More Right-Minded Than the Exorcists.

Chrysostom: But here, as if the demon did not know him, the exorcists added, "I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches." For the reply he gave shows that he knew. The exorcists said simply "Jesus," when

they should have said, “the savior of the world, he who rose again.” They did not wish to acknowledge his glory. For this reason, the demon censures them. He leaps on them and says, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know.” It is as if he had said, “You do not believe, but you abuse the name when you say this. Therefore the temple is desolate, the vessel easy to overcome. You are not preachers, but you are mine.” Great was the demon’s anger. The apostles had the power to do this to them, but they did not do it as of yet. For the apostles, who had power over the demons who did this to people, had even greater power over the people themselves. Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles 41.6

19:14 *Seven Sons of Sceva*

19:15 *Who Are You?*

There Is a Greater Power Than Power Over Demons.

Chrysostom: There may be someone among you who, on hearing this, wishes he were in possession of this power, so that the demons should not be able to look him in the face, and he considers those holy men fortunate because they had such power. But let him listen to Christ, who says, “Do not rejoice because the demons are subject to you.”¹³ He knew that all people especially rejoice in this because of vainglory. For if you seek what pleases God and what is for the common good, another road is greater. For to free people from a demon is not so great as to rescue them from sin. It is not demons that prevent one from attaining to the kingdom of heaven. On the contrary, they assist, albeit unwillingly, by making him who has the demon more sensible. Sin, on the other hand, expels him. But perhaps someone will say, “God forbid it should befall me to be sensible in this way!” I, too, do not wish this for you, but rather that you should do everything because of something else, namely, the love of Christ. But if, God forbid, this should happen, I would comfort you with this. If the demon does not leave, but sin does, to free one of the latter is a greater good deed. Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles 41.14

19:16 *The Evil Spirit Leaped on Them*

Knowing Jesus.

Didymus the Blind: As one confessing God in word alone, he denies him with his deeds. This is “knowing Jesus” according to mere opinion. Therefore, it is no paradox if the evil spirit says to the Jewish exorcists, “I know Jesus” and the following, just as other demons used to say, with a loud cry, to Jesus himself, “I

know who you are, the Holy One of God.”¹⁵ To these you can add the passage, “even demons believe and they tremble,”¹⁶ for it provides no evidence that evil spirits have faith accounted as righteousness. We must also say with regard to our current passage that just as those who receive cures from Jesus do so according to their faith, so those calling on Jesus for the expulsion of a demon or for another cure accomplish this in accord with the faith they have. Here, however, the evil spirit says, “Who are you that call on Jesus, for I do not perceive the power that I have often experienced when his name is called.”
Catena on the Acts of the Apostles 19.13.17

19:19 *Those Who Practiced Magic*

A Fruitful Confession of Sins.

Ammonius: Every sinner must confess his sins and, through his self-conviction, turn away from continuing to commit them, so that he may become just according to the passage, “Confess your sins first so that you may be justified,”² and the passage, “Just is the man who accuses himself.”³ The idolaters and magicians were so many in Ephesus that they prepared magicians’ books at a high price, as if these books held the most noble things in life. Upon believing in Christ, they did not sell them, even though there were many who wanted to obtain them, but they burned them. And they did this first so that no one could take part in their soul-destroying ruin, and second so that they could have no profit from it. For just as it is forbidden to offer to God the value of a dog⁴ or profit from impurity, so also did they judge it an injustice to lay at the apostles’ feet money from such a source. Catena on the Acts of the Apostles 19.18.5

Christ’s Disciples Are Not Magicians.

Didymus the Blind: Let those who accuse Christ’s disciples of being magicians be refuted by this reading, since it shows clearly that all magic is destroyed by the power of their teaching. See these people, not being incompetent but having great ability in this art, after being purified of the magical arts or of their customary demons, how they gathered together all the books of magic and burned them before all present at that time, even though they were of great value. Catena on the Acts of the Apostles 19.19–20.12

19:22 *Two Helpers Sent to Macedonia*

Superstition and Philosophy.

Chrysostom: He sends them ahead to announce his coming and thus to rouse their expectations, but most of all to stay a while in Asia. And for good reason, since there ruled the tyranny of philosophers. He went and spoke with them more, since there was much superstition. Catena on the Acts of the Apostles 19.21.13