**A Group Book Burning**

**Acts 19:19**

**Introduction:**

I. In the book of Acts many pertinent things are recorded for our benefit.

A. The inspired answer to the question, “What must I do to be saved?” Also, the work (acts) of the apostles, and many of the miracles performed by them which brought various results.

II. In this lesson we will reflect on what was called “special” or “unusual” miracles performed at Ephesus which led to confessions of sin and a group book burning!

**Discussion:**

 **I. The Inspired Account - Acts 19:11-17**

 **II. Special or Unusual Miracles – Acts 19:11-12**

A. Paul was endowed with miraculous gifts; he had the power to work miracles. He as others, confirmed the word that he preached by working miracles.

B. In Ephesus, magicians and exorcists had claimed to work miracles.

1. Some superstitious people had believed them. However, unlike these men, Paul had the power to do even greater things than they could even claim to do.

C. What made this series of miracles so special (unusual), was that Paul did not even have to be in the presence of the sick to heal them.

1. Handkerchiefs and aprons were basically the same thing. They were common in the eastern country to use to wipe perspiration from the face.

2. Paul did manual work at Ephesus (Acts 20:34), and so would have used handkerchiefs and aprons.

D. These special miracles would emphasize the work that Paul was doing; the people could know that he was a teacher from God, Because God was with him in these great miracles.

 E. **Lesson - We can help those that others cannot, with the word of God!**

 **III. The Seven Sons of Sceva – Acts 19:13-17**

A. Certain “vagabond” or “strolling” Jews were exorcists/magicians who traveled from place to place practicing their spells and sorcery in the name of Solomon. Jesus alluded to them in Palestine (Matt. 12:27).

B. This particular group is referred to as the seven sons of Sceva.

1. Do not know much about Sceva, but he is referred to as a Jew, and chief of the priests.

2. Some think he was a high priest; however, the Greek is translated here to “ruler” not necessarily a priest.:

C. His sons seemed to consider Paul to be one of them, and as they went to those filled with evil spirits, they used the names of Jesus and Paul to call out the evil spirits (v. 13).

 1. The spirits answered, ***“Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?”*** (v. 15).

2. In this report, the evil spirits caused the men to jump on them and beat them – naked and wounded (v.16).

 a. This allowed for Jesus’ name to be magnified (v.17).

3. The sons of Sceva and the people who saw thought that an undefined power resided in the sacred name of Jesus, and fear fell upon them as did upon the church when Anaias and Sapphira were struck dead (Acts 5).

D. Lesson: It was a perilous thing for men to use the name of Jesus rashly; all the people thought more of this name now, more than ever!

 1. Lesson - **Be right with God – do not follow after fads, etc.**

 **IV. Many Good Choices and Results – Acts 19:18-19**

A. Confessions of wrongdoings

 1. (Romans 10:9-11)

B. Those practicing the “curious arts” brought their books together and burned them. All the books were valued at $50,000 pieces of silver, (approx. $10,000.00). This was indeed a great sacrifice and reckoning!

 1. (1 Thess. 5:22) ***“Abstain from all appearance of evil.”***

C. (Acts 19:20) ***“So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.”*** While the people were in this state of mind, the word of God increased among them.

1. Since they had given up their magical arts, they were now ready to accept something else; hence the truth was preached by Paul found lodging in their hearts.

 a. The full meaning of “mightily” is with overpowering force and strength, which nothing could resist.”

D. No wonder we find a large church in Ephesus. We are told that the word continued to grow and gain strength and for centuries after this Ephesus was a center of Christian power!

E. **Lesson: Make the right choices no matter the cost! Eliminate the things that can interfere with your salvation! \***

**Conclusion:**

I. Takeaways: in this lesson, we have seen first how the name of Jesus can be used improperly. We also see how God’s word can be magnified through good works.

II. Ultimately, we see the importance of eliminating anything that can interfere with our salvation. **No matter what the cost!**