

**Valley Bible Church**  
**Sermon Notes for December 11, 2016**

**The Ministry to the Magicians of Ephesus**  
**Acts 19:11-20**

Acts 18:23-21:16 details Paul's third missionary journey, which centers on the city of Ephesus. Ephesus was the spiritual capital of the Roman Empire. We can see the spiritual battle for their hearts and minds in Ephesians 1:15-23; 3:10 and 6:12.

**1. The function of miracles (19:11-12)**

The reason that these miracles were described as extraordinary was because Paul's clothes were the means by which God healed the sick. It was similar to a miracle of Jesus (Luke 8:44). The modern imitation of these historical events only serves to minimize their significance as validating the revelation of God (cf. 2 Corinthians 12:12; Hebrews 2:3-4).

Roman Catholicism uses Acts 19:12 to support the use of relics. According to this teaching, any body part of a saint, object used by a saint, or object that came in contact with any body part of a saint is to be venerated and also aids in obtaining benefits from God.

The common superstitious belief of the first century Greek culture was that certain objects had special power. Paul did not initiate the use of the handkerchiefs or aprons, but God sovereignly worked in a special way to accommodate their understanding.

**2. The fraudulent magicians (19:13-16)**

These magicians had no ability to do the miracles of Paul so they attempted to copy his methods. They believed that using the right words would get a result according to their desires. The crafting of phrases is spiritually powerless.

People who think they know more about the spiritual realm than what the Bible teaches are subjecting themselves and others to spiritual difficulty.

**3. The faithful magicians (19:17-19)**

This event became known to all, producing fear. The Lord was extolled by the actions of the believers in 19:18-19.

God turned an incident where no one was seeking to serve Him into the exaltation of Christ. We can be confident that God is able to use all sorts of evil for a greater good.

The believers had not immediately forsaken their attachment to books of magic upon conversion. People repent and believe in Christ without recognizing some of the ways they have been practicing ungodliness.

Since one piece of silver was roughly a day's wage, this amounts to many millions of dollars of economic value. Many of the believers confessed, repented, and contributed to the bonfire. The believers did not sell their books because the church had no interest in the furtherance of such superstition. We cannot assist anyone with confusion about Christ.

This burning was a natural, spontaneous response of repentance by the believers; it was not an organized protest against the practices of the society. Planned demonstrations of repentance are only man's attempt to create the work of God.

#### **4. The furthering of the ministry (19:20)**

This is the sixth of seven "progress reports" in the book of Acts (cf. 2:47; 6:7; 9:31; 12:24; 16:5; 28:30-31). The growth of God's word was described as mighty, in contrast to the magic of the Ephesians.

The result of many truly repentant people was the spread of the word of the Lord. This ought to be seen in our church as well.

May our repentance from all ungodliness move us to spread the word of the Lord.