

## **Burn Those Books** By Reverend Krisann Durnford

*“And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds. Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed” (Acts 19:18-20).*

*“Many of the believers began to confess openly and tell all the evil things they had done. Some of them had used magic. These believers brought their magic books and burned them before everyone. Those books were worth about 50,000 silver coins. So in a powerful way the word of the Lord kept spreading and growing. (Acts 19:18-20, ICB).*

Paul was having revival in Ephesus! When he first arrived, he found believers of John the Baptist. After hearing the gospel, they were baptized and received the Holy Ghost.

He spent the next three months in the local synagogue—preaching to Jewish people. After facing unbelief and opposition, he left the synagogue and found another place to preach. For two years he preached Jesus in that city. The Bible says “all which dwelt in Asia heard the word.” God did special miracles. Verse twelve tells us that they took handkerchiefs that had been on Paul’s body and gave those to people who were sick or possessed of evil spirits. The people were healed and delivered. This passage supports our action of sending a prayer cloth to someone, indicating that we are praying for God’s touch in their lives. Although it is quietly mentioned, there is something here we do not want to miss.

Ephesus was steeped in idolatry--filled with cult and occult practices. It is no stretch of the imagination to consider that the majority were participating in evil, sinful behavior.

Prior to our text is an interesting story. Vagabond Jews (those who were doing their own thing and not following Jewish customs or beliefs) decided to mimic Paul and attempted to cast out evil spirits. They had quite the experience. That evil spirit told them, “Jesus I know and Paul I know, but who are you?” Then the possessed man attacked them. Compare this to what was happening when just a handkerchief from Paul was given to someone who was tormented. There is no comparison. This situation caught the attention of the Ephesians. Fear fell on them and the name of Jesus was magnified. That leads us to our text.

### **Burn Those Books**

The people saw real power. They saw the results of faked actions. They saw how it could not stand against evil. The Bible says they believed and confessed. They showed their deeds. What deeds? Their magic and occult practices. These people were practicing magic. Indeed, the commentators tell us that Ephesus was addicted to magic, sorcery, incantations, and spells. These books taught the magic.

Believers came and confessed that they practice or dabbled in this magic. The powerful display of true versus false supernatural power caused them to repent. Their repentance was complete in that they realized they must burn those books. Get rid of the things that were associated with evil. Burn the stuff that was getting between them and a proper relationship with God. We do not see Paul telling them

they had to burn the books, although that may have been part of his preaching. We do see what happened when they were exposed to the power of a supernatural God! They saw and heard how Paul's God healed. They saw and heard how Paul's God commanded the demons. This was an amazing thing for they played with demonic things constantly. They knew the powers of darkness. They knew why they were burning those books. They knew that, no matter how much it cost, they needed to sever all ties with the former life and follow this Jesus who was more powerful than anything they had ever experienced.

### **Satan's Plan**

As I read this chapter, I see a parallel to our lives. The supernatural lures people constantly. Now more than ever, evil is readily available to you and me. Witchcraft runs rampant across our country. The unspeakable things of darkness are being accepted. Don't kid yourself, church. Satan is working overtime to create havoc. The enemy of your soul would like nothing better than to set up shop in your life, your home, and your thinking. II Corinthians 11:14 says, "And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light."

His deception surrounds us. He wants you to think you need his supernatural power. He lies and makes it look good. Satan is aware of what it takes to be in God's presence—and he's out to convince people they don't need to do what it takes to know the real supernatural. He knows that God's holiness cannot exist where there is deception and ungodliness. If he can get us to accept these "books"—these ideas that lead us away from God—he knows we will be alienated from the Lord. If our actions and lifestyle run against God's ways, we become a target--a weak non-player in the kingdom.

You see, without Jesus, it's open season on me. If I'm not living a repented life, I am a target. Without the blood that was applied when I was baptized in Jesus' name, without the Holy Ghost inside of me, I am living in jeopardy.

I had to burn those books. I had to look at myself and say, "What am I playing with? What is in my house? What keeps me from seeing the true, supernatural power of God?"

When Christian America started looking, acting, worshiping, thinking, teaching, and embracing the world's ways, we opened a door that should not have been opened. Calling things that are unholy, holy. Deciding that the unclean was clean. Satan was watching. I imagine him holding his breath to see what we would do with all those things. I imagine him jumping in wicked glee when he realized that we were handing over our lives through the very things we dabbled in. Because he's been there. He once walked in the presence of the Almighty, but it was his sin that took him out.

He doesn't want you to know that. He wants you and me to think that we need all those things that connect to the world. Hosea 4:6 says, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because thou has rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee."

I don't come here to say this lightly. I come to declare what Paul told these very Ephesians in the epistle he wrote to them. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rules of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (See Ephesians 6:12.) I come to say that we must burn those books! If we are going to be what

God wants, if we are going to see the supernatural and be free from demonic oppression, depression, and (for those in this situation) possession, we have to burn those books.

### **What Books?**

What does that mean to us today? It means we better take the time to find out what is behind each thing we do, read, and allow into our lives. We must know the voices that are speaking to us. Are they of God? We must ask the questions:

- Do I want to be free of Satan's devices?
- Do I want to see Jesus do a work in my life and others?

Then we need to burn those books. But exactly what does that mean today? What does that cost us?

Let me put it in real time. Have we examined our house and belongings? The music, the videos, the items in our houses—do these connect back to something worldly or evil. What are they rooted in? How about the graphics we use or books we read? The games we play. The posts we share on social media. The apps we download. The clothing we wear. The symbols we allow in our lives. I'm not telling anyone what to do. I'm telling all of us to get with Jesus and find out if there's some books that need burning!

I've served God for forty-one years. There have been times when Jesus tapped me on the shoulder and asked, "Have you thought about that thing? Don't you think you need to burn it? Get rid of it?" Sometimes it costs something to burn those books. It might cost us to get rid of what is keeping us from the power of God. But let me say it this way: When I step under the blood of Jesus—the blood that purchased my redemption—I am declaring to the spirit world that I am no longer caught by them. When I eliminate unholy from my life and begin to place myself in God's holy presence, amazing things happen.

Unlike the vagabond Jews, Paul did not wander around trying to use his handkerchief to cast out demons. Paul simply preached and lived Jesus. Because of his lifestyle, God was able to work mightily through him. That led others to see the difference. That caused others to realize that they too could be free from the devil's traps.

It's important to understand the power of burning those books. All Ephesus saw what happened. They watched as the believers burned the things from their old life—things worth fifty thousand pieces of silver!!! I guarantee that when you take a stand, when you burn those books that connect to the enemy, people will take notice. Satan will go running as he realizes what you are doing. When I burn those books, I step under the authority of Jesus. I am not acting on my own merit or strength. No, I completely surrender all of that to Him. I truly give myself to Him. I become stronger in Him and can battle in the spiritual world. By burning those old magic books, the Ephesian believers were saying, "I'm not going back. I am completely giving myself to the One who saved me. Nothing is going to get between Him and me."

### **The Word Goes Forth**

So, what is the result of burning those books? We see it in nine words found in verse twenty. "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed."

The Word. That is what caused those people to take such drastic action, to dispose of thousands (perhaps millions) of dollars by burning up the magic books. What a powerful moment! The Word of God took on Satan's kingdom. And the Word always wins. Every one of those books had strings attached to the enemy. But when new life came, when they said, "I'm not going back," those strings were cut.

It is important for us to realize the sequence of these events. The Word was preached, and people were saved. The man of God continued to preach and there was opposition. There will always be opposition from the enemy when we are preaching the Word and seeing people saved, especially if we are tearing into the enemy's territory. Paul had to move location so he could continue preaching and teaching. The supernatural was occurring and the Lord was confirming with healing and deliverance. That is the way it happens. Satan doesn't want you to realize the power that comes in those moments. The demons want to look big and untouchable. But what happened when they believed? What happened when they repented? What happened when they burned those books? The Word grew and prevailed.

I came to serve notice to the devil today! We are here to preach and teach others about Jesus. We are here to pray and see God heal and deliver—not in our own strength but under His authority. We aren't going to allow those books that have ties to unholy things to remain. We are here to burn those books and see God's Word go forth. Satan, you need to step back because God's about to do the supernatural. He's about to put you in your place. There are people of God in Burlington Wisconsin who aren't afraid to burn the books and count the cost. There are people here who understand what we are fighting. And we are coming against the evil in Jesus' name. We are cleaning house and surrendering completely to Jesus because we want His authority.

We've burned the books and we declare that the Word of God is going to prevail!