

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Acts 19:1-7 | Session 51 | The Baptism of Repentance

A.D. 56

We were introduced to Apollos of Alexandria who came to Ephesus, met Aquila and Priscilla, and learned the gospel of salvation by *grace through faith*. Apollos left Ephesus for Achaia and went to Corinth where he may have become the pastor of the church there for a time. Meanwhile, the apostle Paul had departed from Antioch in Syria for his 3rd missionary journey, backtracking all the places he had visited previously. Chapter 18:23 records Paul going *over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia*. Did Paul meet Apollos in Ephesus? It is unknown if he did, but certainly did meet him at some point (1 Corinthians 16:12).

Verse 1—

Paul having passed through the upper coasts. On our map of Paul's 3rd journey, it traces him going through the middle of *Asia Minor*, but he may have gone farther north. Which route he followed is not detailed by the author. Nevertheless, **came to Ephesus**. The city of **Ephesus** was one of the most accessible cities in Asia by either land or sea and the leading city of the province. It was a commercial hub and was home to the temple of the goddess *Diana*. It is here Paul will remain for two years (19:10). Sometime after his arrival he *found certain disciples*. We haven't heard of any Gentile believers in Ephesus up to this point, unless we take 18:27 as meaning *Gentiles which had believed through grace*. We can probably consider these **certain disciples** to be Jews who, were disciples of John the Baptist (Since they only knew of John's baptism, vs. 3). The word **finding** in the Greek is in the *active* voice, perhaps indicating Paul had heard about these disciples and went looking for them apparently to get the answer to one specific question.

Verse 2—

Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? Today, when a person believes, we believe he immediately receives the Holy Ghost, so why would this be a question? It's a question Paul asks because these *certain men* were not living in our dispensation. From the day of Pentecost, when the apostles received the Holy Ghost, up to this point in the book of Acts, those who believed did not receive the Holy Ghost upon believing in Jesus as Messiah. And that is evidenced here in this passage. These certain men were believers, but did not have the Holy Ghost. This is where we have to rightly divide dispensations. If not, then we get faulty theology as seen often among charismatic believers when they ask "Have you received the Holy Spirit?" And if so, have you spoken in tongues because, as they believe, if you have not spoken in tongues then you have not received the Holy Spirit. When someone fails to rightly divide, their theology becomes a mess! During the dispensation of the apostles, receiving the Holy Ghost was accompanied by a manifestation of the Spirit. So here we have believers in Jesus Messiah, but have not had the Holy Ghost given to them through an apostle. Apollos was unable to give the Holy Ghost since he was not an apostle.

Verse 3—

And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And their response to Paul was, **Unto John's baptism**.

Verse 4—

Paul now gives them a recap of exactly what happened when John baptized at the Jordan River, **John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance**. John's purpose was to prepare the way for the coming of the Lord. In order for the people to be ready for His coming **the people** had to get their lives in order through the baptism of repentance in order for them to **believe on Christ Jesus**. Paul is telling these men, "The baptism you received was in preparation for the Messiah."

Verse 5—

When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. This is a statement that is often misinterpreted. Most commentaries I looked at for this verse say these *certain disciples were being re-baptized*.

- *This is the only place in the New Testament that refers to anyone being rebaptized.*¹
- *Those who received only John's baptism and have not believed in Jesus (or at least have not received the Spirit) are rebaptized in Jesus's name*²
- *The response of the disciples to this preaching was immediate. V. 5 says they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.*³

Most assume the **they** are the *certain disciples*, but just by reading it carefully it is clear that verse 5 is a continuation of Paul's explanation of John's baptism and the **they** refers back to **the people** John was addressing in verse 4.

Verse 6—

There would be no purpose in re-baptizing these men. They only needed the Holy Ghost, **And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them**, as in other places where the Holy Spirit was given, the men experienced the manifestation of the spirit and **they spake with tongues, and prophesied**.

Paul explained in 1 Corinthians 13:8 that one day *prophecies shall fail and tongues, they shall cease*. Today, we do not receive manifestations of the Spirit, they have been *done away*. During the apostolic dispensation in Acts that was not the case.

Verse 7—

And all the men were about twelve. Why this info is given we don't know. Were these men going to be a new model for the grace gospel and the body of Christ as the original twelve disciples were for the kingdom gospel?

¹ Toussaint, Stanley D. "Acts." *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*. Ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck. Vol. 2. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985. 409. Print.

² Keener, Craig S. *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary*. 15:1-23:35. Vol. 3. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014. Print.

³ Witherington, Ben, III. *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998. Print.