

## Thrice Baptized (Acts 19:1-7)<sup>a</sup>

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### Context

1. Paul is beginning his third missionary journey
2. Unlike the first two missionary journeys—where he travelled to regions which had never heard the gospel—the third missionary journey retraces the path of the second
3. The focus is less evangelistic and more strengthening the new converts: *discipleship*

### Passage (Acts 19:1-7)

[1] And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples [2] he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” So they said to him, “We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.” [3] And he said to them, “Into what then were you baptized?” So they said, “Into John’s baptism.” [4] Then Paul said, “John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.” [5] When they heard [this], they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. [6] And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. [7] Now the men were about twelve in all.<sup>1</sup>

### John’s baptism

#### 1. Followers of John the Baptist

- A. These men were “disciples,” *learners and followers*, but of whom and what?
- B. “Did you receive the Spirit when you believed?” (Acts 19:2)
  - I. Implication: Paul expected they would have received the Spirit at the moment of belief and not as a second work (as some Pentecostals teach)<sup>3</sup>
- C. “So they said to him, ‘We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.’” (Acts 19:2)
  - I. Not necessarily that they were completely unaware of the Spirit, but that He was to be received in conjunction with belief.<sup>5</sup>

D. Apparently, these men were in a similar situation as Apollos before he had received additional instruction from Aquila and Priscilla

In the previous chapter we read: “This man [Apollos] had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John”. (Acts 18:25)

E. They were “disciples” in the sense of believing in and following that which they had been taught—by John the Baptist, and possibly by Apollos

I. They remained unaware that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah Whom John promised was to follow

II. Hence, it appears they had not yet “believed on Jesus Christ”

III. They also were unaware of the outpouring of the Spirit in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2)

## 2. John’s baptism: preparatory to subsequent faith in the fuller revelation of the Coming One

“Then Paul said, “John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.”” (Acts 19:4-6)

A. Repentance - changing one’s mind to agree with the message of John the Baptist

B. Baptism - an act of identification, submission to, and agreement with the message

I. A demonstration of belief connected with their change of mind

C. Preparatory

I. “And [John the Baptist] preached, saying, “There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”” (Mark 1:7-8)

a. One follows after John

b. Mightier than John

c. I baptize with water, but He . . . with the Holy Spirit

D. Subsequently, these disciples of John come to faith in Jesus (as explained by Paul)

I. “When they heard [this], they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.” (Acts 19:5)

- II. Water baptism a second time - an act of identification, submission, and agreement with Paul's message
- III. Paul laid his hands on them: resulting in their third baptism: this time by Jesus with the Spirit - placing them into the body of Christ

#### E. Spontaneous

- I. As with the Gentiles at the house of Cornelius in Acts 10, they had no knowledge of or expectation of speaking in tongues
- II. No "coaching" as is generally the practice within Pentecostal circles today
- III. In every case in Acts, the tongues spoken were *bona fide* languages — not "ecstatic speech" as exhibited by the modern day "tongues movement," which claims to be practicing same NT phenomenon—but is not

#### F. Evidence of Acts as a *transitional book*

- I. Acts documents a historic transitional period spanning over a number of years
- II. Concerns the initial establishment of the Church, the body of Christ
- III. Does not represent the norm for all Christian practice in our age
- IV. Instead: we place more emphasis on the epistles, explicit instructions to the early Church

#### V. Examples:

- a. Order of belief, water baptism, and spirit baptism differ
  - i. Here: 1) belief; 2) water baptism; 3) spirit baptism
  - ii. House of Cornelius (Acts 10): 1) belief; 2) spirit baptism; 3) water baptism
- b. Number of water baptisms
  - i. Here: twice — once as response to belief in John the Baptist's message of repentance; again in response to Paul's message concerning Christ
  - ii. Epistles: only once, in response to faith in Christ

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### **Spirit baptism - a new ministry, never occurring in the Old Testament or Gospels**

- 1. **Covered extensively in previous sermons on Acts — especially chapters 2, 8, and 10.**
- 2. **Never occurred prior to the Day of Pentecost**

#### A. Preconditions were not yet fulfilled

## I. Not until Jesus had departed

“Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.” (John 16:7-8)

## II. Not until Jesus had been glorified

“On the last day, that great day of the feast [of Tabernacles], Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for [1] the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because [2] Jesus was not yet glorified.” (John 7:37-39)

## B. Jesus indicated it was something yet future prior to His departure at the ascension

- I. “for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be [future tense] baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now” (Acts 1:5)

## C. Peter indicated it began on the Day of Pentecost (and was repeated with the Gentiles at the house of Cornelius)

- I. “And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning. Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, ‘John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’” (Acts 11:15-16)

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## Tongues in Acts

1. Spirit-baptism of Jews on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2, A.D. 33)
2. Spirit-baptism of Samaritans, 3-4 years after Pentecost (Acts 8, A.D. 36-37)
3. Spirit-baptism of Gentiles at the house of Cornelius, 6 years after Pentecost (Acts 10, A.D. 39)
4. Spirit-baptism of disciples of John in Ephesus, 19 years after Pentecost (A.D. 52)
5. Different people groups all being joined by the new ministry of the Spirit: the formation of the Church, the body of Christ

A. First: Jews, then Samaritans, then Gentiles, then disciples of John

### 6. Purpose of tongues in Acts

A. When studied together and carefully compared, the Spirit-baptism events recorded in Acts exhibit design and purpose—they are not happenstance occurrences

Chapter	Region	When	Who	Tongues	Sign
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		(A.D.)			
Acts 2	Jerusalem	33	Jews	human languages	Sign to waiting disciples: the <i>Promise of the Father</i> had arrived. Sign to visiting and local Jews: judgment of Israel, God turning to foreigners. Endorsement of Peter and those who were Spirit-baptized.
Acts 8	Samaria	36-37	Samaritans	?	Sign to Samaritans: dependence upon laying on of Jewish hands: <i>salvation is of the Jews</i> (John 4:22).
Acts 10	Caesarea (beginning of the <i>ends of the Earth</i> , Acts 1:8)	39	Gentiles (Italians in Caesarea)	human language	Sign to Jews: Gentiles given salvation (Acts 11:15-18).
Acts 19	Ephesus (more <i>ends of the Earth</i> , Acts 1:8)	52	Disciples of John the Baptist	human language	Sign to John's disciples, as "Old Testament believers:" authority of Paul as a NT Apostle (on a par with that of Peter [Acts 8:14-17]), Spirit baptism by Christ now superseded water baptism by John. A sign to the disciples that the Holy Spirit had been bestowed upon them.

## 7. The sequence of Spirit baptism is in accord with the command of Jesus in Acts 1

"And being assembled together with [them], He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," [He said], "you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (Acts 1:4-8)

- A. Following Spirit baptism: the early Jewish church would be witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea (Acts 2), Samaria (Acts 8), and to the ends of the earth (Acts 10, 19 — the rest of the book).
- B. A "gear shift" in God's dealing with Israel vs. the nations
  - I. The promise of the Father - the giving of the Spirit in a new ministry
  - II. Contrasted with expectations of the restoration of the Kingdom to Israel
    - a. The king had been presented to the nation Israel
    - b. The religious leaders, representing the nation-in-large, rejected their king for a Gentile king
      - i. ". . . Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar!" (John 19:15b)

c. Instead of being taking up the throne of David, Messiah was rejected and crucified

i. “He came to His own and His own did not receive Him” (John 1:11)

III. As a result, the Israel’s kingdom is postponed ushering in the age of the Church during which global evangelization becomes the focus while Israel remains, by-and-large, in disobedience

IV. The “Times of the Gentiles”, which began with the Babylonian captivity deposing the last king in the line of Judah to sit upon David’s throne, now continues until the Second Coming

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#### Endnotes:

1. Acts 19:1-7, NKJV
2. Ref-1411, 1717
3. “The manner in which Paul phrased his question implies that he understood that the Spirit is normally given at the time of faith in Jesus and not subsequent to it.”<sup>2</sup>
4. Ref-0038, 409
5. “they probably meant they had not heard He had been given or was being given. A similar construction is used in the Greek in John 7:39.”<sup>4</sup>

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#### Sources:

- Acts 19:1-7** Unless indicated otherwise, all Scripture references are from the *New King James Version*, copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
- Ref-0038** John Walvoord and Roy. B. Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: SP Publications, 1983).
- Ref-1411** Michael A. Rydelnik, J. Spencer, eds. *The Moody Bible Commentary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014).

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#### Links Mentioned Above

- a - See [http://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Acts\\_by\\_Tony\\_Garland/66\\_Acts\\_19\\_1-7/index.htm](http://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Acts_by_Tony_Garland/66_Acts_19_1-7/index.htm).
- b - See <http://www.spiritandtruth.org/id/tg.htm>.
- c - See <http://www.spiritandtruth.org>.