

THE REST OF THE STORY

Studies in the Book of Acts

***“We will move the world not by criticism of it, nor conformity to it –
but by combustion within it of lives ignited by the Spirit of God”***

Vance Havner

Text

Acts 18:24-19:7

Topic

Apollos and the twelve disciples of John the Baptist are instructed about the baptism with the Holy Spirit by believers who were themselves empowered by Him to be witnesses

Title

*We've Got Spirit, Yes We Do;
We've Got Spirit, How About You?*

Acts 18:24 Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man *and* mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus.

Acts 18:25 This man 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 18:26 So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

Acts 18:27 And when he desired to cross to Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; and when he arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace;

Acts 18:28 for he vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.

Acts 19:1 And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples

Acts 19:2 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."

Acts 19:3 And he said to them, "Into what then were you baptized?" So they said, "Into John's baptism."

Acts 19:4 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."

Acts 19:5 When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Acts 19:6 And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.

Acts 19:7 Now the men were about twelve in all.

Introduction

I have a certain sensitivity when discussing the subject of the baptism with the Holy Spirit. It stems from an experience I had early in my Christian walk.

Pam and I were given a series of Bible study tapes. They were on the subject of the Holy Spirit. One in particular was on the subject of the baptism with the Holy Spirit. The tape kept suggesting that there was a further, subsequent experience I could have with the Holy Spirit. I hastily concluded that I was being told I wasn't really saved. We refused to listen to the tapes – indignantly returning them.

A short time later, while driving in my car and still fuming over the tapes, the Lord impressed upon me the following thought. It was as if He said to me, "If there **is** a baptism with the Holy Spirit, don't you want it?"

Well, if you put it that way - **of course I did!** And the moment I realized there was such an experience, I received it by faith driving in my 1978 Monte Carlo at the Colton interchange of interstates 10 and 15.

I don't ever want any believer in Jesus Christ to feel as though they are not saved and therefore indwelt by God the Holy Spirit. But at the same time there is a baptism with the Holy Spirit that can be experienced and it is sometimes received subsequent to salvation.

Since there is such a baptism... Don't you want it? Of course you do!

I'll organize my thoughts around two points: #1 You Should Take The Opportunity To Explain The Baptism With The Holy Spirit, and #2 You Should Give The Opportunity To Experience The Baptism With The Holy Spirit.

#1 You Should Take The Opportunity
To Explain The Baptism With The Holy Spirit
(18:24-28)

OK. We don't read that Apollos received the baptism with the Holy Spirit. But it is more than implied. Apollos and the twelve disciples in Ephesus had in common that each only knew the baptism of John the Baptist. In both cases they were enlightened. Aquila and Priscilla would have told Apollos exactly what Paul told the twelve disciples in Ephesus. Apollos would have received the baptism with the Holy Spirit as they did.

Luke purposely explained the two events differently to emphasize two aspects of the same truth. The emphasis with Apollos is the *explanation* he was given by Aquila and Priscilla.

Acts 18:24 Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man *and* mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus.

Eloquent can refer to his speaking ability but it also translates as *learned*. Apollos was a smart guy who could really explain the Scriptures.

Acts 18:25 This man 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.

Some disciple of John the Baptist's had traveled as far as **Alexandria** and **instructed** Apollos. The message of John the Baptist was to prepare **the way of the Lord** because the Messiah was about to be revealed. Apollos received the instruction and submitted to what was called **the baptism of John**. It was a water baptism that declared you were repenting of sin and preparing yourself to receive the Messiah.

Wherever Apollos went he **fervently** and **accurately** told the Jews to prepare **the way of the Lord** and submit to **the baptism of John**.

Acts 18:26 So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

Visitors to the synagogues were often asked to deliver the weekly sermon. Apollos delivered his talk about preparing for the coming of the Messiah.

Aquila and Priscilla knew the rest of the story. ***The Messiah had come!*** John the Baptist had identified Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Jesus had gone to the Cross as our substitute and sacrifice. He had risen from the dead and ascended into Heaven. He had sent the promised baptism with the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.

Aquila and Priscilla took Apollos aside and filled him in. *We can only imagine his excitement!*

Acts 18:27 And when he desired to cross to Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; and when he arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace;

Acts 18:28 for he vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.

Apollos ended up in Corinth, the capital of the province of **Achaia**. He **greatly** edified the church; he evangelized the nonbelieving **Jews**. He focused his message on what he had recently learned – that **Jesus is the Christ** introduced by John the Baptist and promised in the **Scriptures**.

- being changed to bring change -

Notice that Aquila and Priscilla **explained the way of God more accurately**. They didn't nullify everything Apollos believed. In fact, we'd say that Apollos was saved before he encountered Aquila and Priscilla. He was saved the same way all people were saved before Jesus rose from the dead: He believed God's promise of a Savior and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

Apollos would have been born-again and received the indwelling of God the Holy Spirit. Either simultaneously or subsequently he would have been baptized with the Holy Spirit. Somewhere in there he would have submitted to water baptism in the name of Jesus. These are the things that always happened in the first century. It happened on the Day of Pentecost in Acts two; it happened in Samaria in Acts eight; and it happened at the house of Cornelius in Acts ten. In

chapter nineteen it will happen again to folks in the same condition as Apollos.

The emphasis in the Apollos story is on the **explanation**. He was deficient in his knowledge about Jesus and all things subsequent to Jesus. Once explained to him he received it and went forward with the power of the Holy Spirit promised by the Lord.

I think that a lot of believers need to have the baptism with the Holy Spirit explained to them:

1. Many have been taught that there is no baptism with the Holy Spirit. They've been told you 'get' everything the moment you are saved.
2. Many others have been taught that the baptism with the Holy Spirit is losing control of yourself and manifesting the gift of tongues.

Once the baptism of the Holy Spirit is explained from Scripture as a Scriptural relationship with the Holy Spirit you require in order to empower your witness it can be received by faith and you can start appreciating its power to serve the Lord.

#2 You Should Give The Opportunity To Experience The Baptism With The Holy Spirit (19:1-7)

Meanwhile the apostle Paul started on what is called his third missionary journey. Interestingly he went to no new territory. It was more a return trip to exhort the churches he had previously founded. I call it the *Be Strong* tour.

[Acts 19:1](#) And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples [Acts 19:2](#) 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."

Paul could tell immediately something was missing from their witness. The wording of his question is insightful as to his own theology of the Holy Spirit. Evidently he thought it was possible to **believe** but not yet

have **received the Holy Spirit**. Now since Paul himself will later write that no one can call Jesus Lord except by the Holy Spirit (1Corinthians 12:3), he must have meant that you can be saved and indwelt by the Holy Spirit but not yet have received the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

The answer they gave Paul was equally insightful. Since they were disciples of John the Baptist they would have **heard** a lot about the **Holy Spirit**. A key teaching of John's was that the promised Messiah would baptize His followers with the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11). What these guys obviously meant was that they had not **heard** whether the **Holy Spirit** had been given as promised.

They must have said something about baptism so Paul asked them what they meant by it.

Acts 19:3 And he said to them, "Into what then were you baptized?" So they said, "Into John's baptism."

Ah. Just like Apollos. They were saved in the Old Testament sense but had not yet been born again.

Acts 19:4 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."

Acts 19:5 When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Paul gave these guys the rest of the story. They must have been born-again and indwelt with the Holy Spirit or else Paul would not have **baptized** them in water.

Now these born-again, saved, water-baptized disciples who were indwelt by the Holy Spirit had a subsequent experience of being baptized with the Holy Spirit:

Acts 19:6 And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.

Thus we must conclude that there is a Scriptural distinction between believing and being baptized with the Holy Spirit.

When you believe He comes *in* you. The baptism is His coming *upon* you to empower your witness.

In their case the baptism with the Holy Spirit was accompanied by speaking in **tongues** and they also **prophesied**. If you put all the episodes of folks receiving the baptism with the Holy Spirit you see a wide diversity:

1. On the Day of Pentecost the believers were suddenly baptized with the Holy Spirit as a noise from Heaven that sounded like a mighty, rushing wind filled the house. Tongues of fire sat upon each of the disciples and they began to speak of the wonderful works of God in known languages that they had never learned.
2. In Samaria the baptism of the Holy Spirit was imparted to believers subsequent to their being born-again and water baptized when Peter and John laid hands on them. No special manifestations like tongues or prophecy are mentioned.
3. At the house of Cornelius the listeners were baptized with the Holy Spirit simultaneously as they were saved. They spoke with tongues. Then they were water baptized.
4. Apollos was certainly baptized with the Holy Spirit. No details are given except that it happened quietly and by faith in response to the explanation of Aquila and Priscilla.
5. The twelve disciples at Ephesus were saved, water baptized, received the baptism with the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands, then manifested His coming upon them with tongues and prophecy.

Acts 19:7 Now the men were about twelve in all.

Twelve men. Paul would have had to lay his hands on them one at a time. He undoubtedly prayed over them. The emphasis here is that they were given opportunity to **experience** this relationship with the Holy Spirit.

You might have received the baptism with the Holy Spirit simultaneously with your salvation. You might have received it subsequently, sometime after you were saved. Maybe it was accompanied by certain manifestations; maybe it wasn't.

But maybe you've never received it because it's not been explained to you as a Scriptural relationship you require in order to be empowered as a witness for Jesus. Or because it was explained to you as some weird, out-of-control charisma.

You can receive it today, right where you sit... Or later, in your car or at home.

Sometimes it is given as you are prayed for.

Since there is such a baptism... Don't you want it?

