

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

## ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

### EPHESUS (ACTS 19:1-7)

#### TRIP #3

"While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul travelled to Ephesus." Upon his arrival, he met "some disciples" and asked them an odd question, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"

- This is an odd question because Paul states in Ephesians 1:13 that **when we "hear the message of truth," we "are sealed with the Holy Spirit."**

#### SO WHY HADN'T THESE MEN RECEIVED THE HS?

Ephesians 1:13 says, "when we hear the message...the gospel" we are "sealed with the Holy Spirit." These men were disciples of John's teaching and hadn't heard the full gospel yet.

- In order for them to be filled with the Holy Spirit, Paul had to teach them the "message of truth," the "gospel of your salvation."

#### IT DOESN'T STOP AT BELIEF, IT STARTS THERE

These men believed in the Messiah, but were ignorant of Pentecost (Acts 2) and the proper way to respond to Jesus.

- In Acts and throughout the NT, **the salvation message isn't simply a belief in Jesus but a response to Him through repentance, baptism, and being a residence and instrument for the HS.**

#### PROPER BAPTISM

When the disciples of John heard about the full gospel and the indwelling of the HS, they were baptized in Jesus' name. This isn't condoning the need to be baptized multiple times, but showing **the need to be baptized correctly and with knowledge of what identity one is adopting.**

#### ANOTHER MINI-PENTECOST

Like Acts 10 when the HS came to the Gentiles, the disciples of John spoke in tongues similar to Acts 2 when God first poured out His HS.

- **This doesn't mean that tongues accompany everyone when they receive the Spirit.** These were unique events meant to show all groups could be included into the Christian family.

#### THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The infilling of the Holy Spirit happens at conversion/regeneration and isn't a separate event. The manifestation of tongues may be a part of conversion, but isn't mandatory or even the norm.

- **God distributes when and what gifts we use to edify His church and build our relationship with Him** (1 Corinthians 12:4).

#### THE WAY (ACTS 19:8-12)

##### PAUL'S NORMAL PATTERN OF MINISTRY

While in Ephesus, Paul went to the synagogue and preached. About 3 months had gone by with no issues (a record for Paul), but eventually "some became hardened and would not believe," so they proceeded to "slander the Way in front of the crowds." **The Way** was the original title for Christians. Many still used it in Ephesus.

##### DISCUSSIONS IN THE HALL OF TYRANNUS

Paul took the Jews that became Christians to the hall of Tyrannus, a Greek debater, and conducted daily lessons for 2 years.

- Luke exaggerates a touch when he says "all residents of Asia [minor], both Jews and Greeks, heard the word..." His point is that everyone in that area had the opportunity to hear Paul.

#### "GOD WAS PERFORMING EXTRAORDINARY MIRACLES"

During the rapid spread of the gospel in Asia Minor, God performed some "extraordinary miracles by Paul's hands, so that even facecloths or aprons that touched his skin were brought to the sick and disease ...and evil spirits came out of them." God used inanimate objects to carry healing power from Paul to the sick.

#### THIS WAS (AND STILL IS) UNCOMMON

**God can do anything**, but methods to heal and deliver people like v10-12 are rare. Miracles are never the center of evangelism in the Bible but a means to an end of proclaiming the gospel.

- **God doesn't act out of character to His Word. He can do anything, but all miracles must be tested by the word and ultimately highlight the gospel.**

#### SORCERY (ACTS 19:13-20)

##### THE ITINERANT JEWISH EXORCISTS

Some Jewish mystics/sorcerers saw the power of the Holy Spirit working through Paul with these "extraordinary miracles" and tried to invoke Jesus' name to command evil spirits.

- **We see how self-serving people can try and to manipulate the power of God for their benefit.**

#### THE SEVEN SONS OF SCEVA

Ephesus had many people that practiced occult rituals. The Seven Sons of Sceva were a group that blended Judaism with magic (Kabbalah). They saw that Jesus' name had power, and used the name in incantations.

- **How often do we see people that dabble in evil but try to use Jesus' name for their benefit?**

#### WHO ARE YOU AGAIN?

Apparently messing with the demonic while lacking with the Holy Spirit can be quite dangerous. After the 7 Sons try to exorcise a demon, the demon responds, "I know Jesus, and I recognize Paul—but who are you?"

- **When one uses Jesus' name without having a relationship with Him, it opens the door for attack!**

#### THIS IS WHY WE ARE FILLED WITH HIS SPIRIT

After the botched exorcism, the demonically possessed man jumps on the 7 Sons and beats them up so badly they ran out of the house naked and bleeding.

- Demons know Jesus and His capabilities. They also know if we're not filled with His Spirit. **Only a fool would step up to the demonic without the Spirit!**

#### MAYBE NOW PEOPLE WILL RESPECT THE NAME

After seeing the Jewish mystics fail at using Jesus' name, everyone in Ephesus became afraid of misusing Jesus' name and dabbling with the occult. Luke records that Jesus' name was "held in high esteem."

- **The 2nd Commandment is not to use God's name in vain. Often times, we don't respect God properly.**

#### MANY BELIEVERS CONFESSED

"...many who had become believers confessed and disclosed their practices." We see the need to confess and repent when we act contrary to Jesus' teachings.

- **When is the last time we evaluated the literature, media, and influences in our lives? Do we confess unChristian allegiances?**

#### BOOK BURNING TIME!

They didn't just confess; they **ridded themselves of evil influences** by collecting the equivalent of 137 years of salaries worth of literature and destroyed it.

- Until the Sceva event, new Christians **didn't realize how evil the things they set before their eyes actually were, but when they did, they removed the evil.**

#### THIS WAS NOT MANDATED BY THE CHURCH

Paul didn't initiate the book burning. The new Christians realized that they were partaking in things that pulled their allegiance away from Jesus, and they decided to remove those stumbling blocks.

- For Christians, a separation from sin and things that don't align with God's will should be a normal response!

#### INVADING THE KINGDOM OF DIANA

Ephesus had a large and famous temple to Diana called the Temple of Artemis. This city would have been a hotbed of demonic influence and occult practices.

- **It was in this city that one of the most influential churches in history took root and made a tremendous impact on the world!**

#### NOT OF FEAR, BUT OF LOVE

- Separation from the evil of the world should not be done with legalism or fear tactics, but out of **a genuine desire to honor and love Jesus Christ.**
- Do we love Christ enough to divorce ourselves from things that flirt with, or maybe even fully embrace, the demonic?

#### INVADING THE DARKNESS

- If we are true believers of Jesus Christ, we are **insulated** and sealed by His Spirit
- If we are full of the Holy Spirit we are given the power and ability by God to **infiltrate the darkest corners of humanity and introduce the Light.**
- We may have the potential to light up the darkness, **but are we full and prepared?**