

What to do with Substandard Christianity?

Acts 19:1-7

By Phillip G. Kayser

Intro:

If passages of Scripture could feel the pain when they are twisted, this one would have been on morphine long ago. It has been used as a proof text to show that you aren't saved if you don't speak in tongues. Others use it to prove something quite different, that the baptism of the Spirit is always a second work of grace. Others say that this passage proves that if you aren't baptized by immersion in their church, you need to get rebaptized. Wesleyans frequently appeal to this passage to teach that Christians can come to a place where they no longer sin. And that one's a real stretch. On the other hand, some Reformed people try valiantly to make this say that these disciples weren't really saved after all. Other Reformed people say that these people were saved, but that verse 5 continues the words of Paul, and are not the words of Luke. In other words, they say that verse 5 is talking about what John the Baptist used to do – he used to baptize people in the name of the Lord Jesus. Their conclusion is that these guys did not get rebaptized. I think most Reformed people in recent years have recognized that this simply does not fit the Greek. But here are some other questions: Is this passage even talking about the Baptism of the Spirit? If so, is it a second work of grace? What are the evidences of that baptism? I don't care which commentary you read on the book of Acts, you will find most of them admitting that this is a tough one.

I say all of that to warn you upfront that you might disagree with my interpretation, and that's OK. In the booklet on the back table that describes the circles of belief, liberty and mutual respect, this is definitely not one of the inner circles. It's hard to get even two Reformed people to agree on this passage. And so, I'm not going to be dogmatic. You can freely disagree with me. But I don't want to skip over the passage. Luke included it for a reason, and I have prayerfully been trying to discover that reason. And I think that God introduces these messy situations that don't fit a paradigm so that we don't become legalistic and formulaic. Everybody is in trouble on this passage. It just doesn't fit any one theological paradigm – except for mine of course! ☺ No, I can assure you that I have struggled with this passage too. But I think the beauty of this passage is that it can give us humility as we let God be God to work beyond our expectations. I will be showing how it is

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consistent. But I really had to wrestle with this passage and for a while I wished that I could just skip over it. Hopefully by the end of this sermon you won't be wising I had skipped over it too. Just look at it as a fun exercise in detective work. Luke gives us enough hints so that we can figure out what he intended.

I. Luke is thematically connecting this event with Acts 18:24-28 (v. 1a)

A. The explicit mention of Apollos (v. 1)

First of all, it is quite clear that Luke is trying to thematically connect this event with Acts 18:24-28. We need to remember that chapter divisions were not put into the Bible until Cardinal Caro added them in 1236 AD. And the way verse 1 is written makes it clear that it is a continuation of a story. It says, “**And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples...**” etc. You have to go into chapter 18 to discover that Paul has just started his third missionary journey, to find out who Apollos is and to discover what has been going on in Ephesus. Too many mistakes of interpretation have been made because this passage has been yanked out of context. So let's read Acts 18:24-28.

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.

B. Both show people who only know the baptism of John – Apollos (18:25) and the twelve (19:3).

Immediately we see three parallels. Verse 25 says of Apollos, **though he knew only the baptism of John**. Chapter 19:3 indicates that the twelve disciples Paul talked to knew only the baptism of John. This indicates that the whole passage is talking about the relationship of the baptism of John to Christian baptism. If you emphasize only chapter 18, you will say with the

early Reformers that both baptisms are identical. If you emphasize only chapter 19 you will say with some later Reformed people that they are quite different. But when you take the passages together, you will come to a third conclusion, which I won't give right now. Just suffice it to say that Luke wants us to see these disciples as being in the same boat as Apollos.

C. Both show people lacking something – Apollos (18:26) and the twelve (19:4).

Second, it is clear that both Apollos and the twelve disciples were lacking something in their Christianity. In chapter 18:26 it is clear to Aquila and Priscilla that Apollos is a believer, but something is not quite right. Verse 26 says, **“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.** In chapter 19:4 we see the same thing: Paul had to take the twelve disciples aside and explain to them the way of God more accurately. There was something they were lacking. So that is the second parallel.

D. Both show people who were saved and used by God and accurately know some basics – Apollos (18:24-26a) and the twelve (19:1b-2a)

But Luke does not want us to assume that either Apollos or the twelve were unsaved. When we looked at the story of Apollos, we saw that he was clearly saved and knew of God's grace. He was mighty in the Scriptures, was instructed in the way of the Lord (which I take to be John's instructions about the coming Messiah), he was a follower of the Messiah, he was fervent in spirit, spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, had at least two works of God's grace in his life in verse 26 (humility and boldness), he loved the brethren in verse 27, helped those who had believed through grace and was a worker for the Lord Jesus. There is no hint that he was not a disciple (or a true believer).

But right out of the chute in the next verse Luke says, **“And finding some disciples...”** He puts these people into the same category – believers.

1. Objection: some say that the word “disciples” could mean that they were “disciples” of John (Matt 9:14; 11:2; Mark 2:18; Luke 5:33; 7:18,19; John 1:35; 4:1)

Some people have tried valiantly to get around the meaning of that phrase by saying, “They were disciples of John or of Apollos, but not

disciples of Jesus.” And I have listed some Scriptures that they appeal to. And those Scriptures do speak of disciples of John in the Gospels.

2. Answer: A disciple of John is pointed to Jesus just as a disciple of Paul was.

a) A disciple of John was taught to follow the coming Messiah (John 1:35-39; 3:22-36; Mark 1:7-8)

But wait a minute. What does that prove? What does it mean to be a disciple of John? All disciples of John were taught to be followers of the coming Messiah. What did it mean to be a disciple of Paul? It didn't mean that the person wasn't a disciple of Jesus. It meant that Paul was discipling the person into the things of Jesus. Paul and John were just tools to train people “in the way of the Lord” (which is what Apollos was trained in – 18:25). To say that a disciple of John is not a true believer is ridiculous. Sub point a) gives some Scriptures to show that all disciples of John were taught to follow Jesus.

b) Mark does not begin the Gospel after the resurrection. “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ” is John’s preaching (Mark 1:1-8)

Point b indicates that the Gospel of Jesus didn't start in the book of Acts, like some hyper-dispensationalists believe. The Gospel of Mark starts with these words, “**The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God...** and he gives eleven verses about John's ministry of pointing to Jesus and making disciples of Jesus. John's ministry was the beginning of the Gospel.

c) The message of John and Jesus was identical – John (Matt 3:2) and Jesus (Matt 4:17).

And if you look at the messages of both men, you will find that the messages were identical. Matthew 3:2 summarizes John's message as, “**Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!**” And Matthew 4:17 summarizes the message of Jesus as, “**Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**” Identical words, indicating an identical Gospel.

d) Just as all disciples of Paul were disciples of Jesus (“imitate me just as I also imitate Christ” – 1 Cor. 11:1), all disciples of John were disciples of the coming Messiah

You see, any disciple in the New Testament, if he is being discipled properly, will follow the pattern of Paul when he said, “**imitate me just as I also imitate Christ.**” A disciple of Phil Kayser better be a disciple of Jesus or I have just started a cult. To make disciples of John out to be non-Christians or non-believers just doesn’t work.

e) The question is, how does Luke use the term “disciple” in Acts: he always uses the term to indicate saved Christians (v. 9,30; see 1:15; 6:1,2,7; 9:1,10,19,25,26,36,38; 11:26,29; 13:52; 14:20,21,22,28; 15:10; 16:1; 18:23,27; 19:9,30; 20:1,7,30; 21:4,16)

But I think more to the point is the way *Luke himself* consistently uses the term “disciple” in the book of Acts. He’s not trying to confuse us. He is communicating with the word “disciples” in verse 1 that these were born again believers. That’s the way Luke uses the term, and you can check that out for yourselves with the 27 verses from the book of Acts that I listed in your outline. But for now, just look down at verse 9 for how Luke uses this term. “**But when some were hardened and *did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way* before the multitude, he departed from them and *withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus.*** It’s clear here that disciples are contrasted with those who did not believe. And you will see the same meaning in the other uses of that term in Acts. Acts 11:26 says, “**And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.**” Luke is defining his terms – a disciple is a believer; is a Christian.

f) Paul certainly assumes that they are believers (v. 2 – “when you believed”), but Luke by inspiration declares that they were already believers (“v. 1 - disciples)

But there is one more proof. If you look at verse 2, you will see that Paul assumes that they were indeed believers. “**...he said to them, ‘Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?’**” He spoke to them as believers. They didn’t deny that they were believers; they just didn’t know that the Holy Spirit had been given at Pentecost.

E. I conclude that Luke wants us to think of these twelve as being in the same category as Apollos.

So when you take all of the evidence together, I think we can safely conclude that Luke wants us to think of these twelve men as being in the same category as Apollos. They were true believers who had been discipled by John. But there were some things that they had not yet learned or experienced.

II. What this passage is not teaching

A. It is not teaching us how to get saved since they were already saved (v. 1b)

With that as background, I think we can move forward and start looking at what this passage does not mean. This is a strategy that I have always used when I am trying to figure out a controversial passage. If you can weed out options that are obviously wrong, it helps to narrow the options down to a point where you can see a little more clearly. I don't usually share all of the detective work that I go through in uncovering a passage, but this one is so controversial that I thought it would be important to bring you along every step of the way. Otherwise our applications at the end aren't going to make as much sense.

I think we have already demonstrated point A. This passage is not teaching us how to get saved. We know that because they are already saved. Calvin and the early Reformers had great proofs to demonstrate that.

1. This rules out the older Pentecostal view that you aren't saved unless you speak in tongues.

But that immediately rules out some strange teachings that have been based upon this passage. One is a view that you aren't saved unless you speak in tongues. This has been discredited so many times that the numbers who believe it are dwindling. But I am shocked at how many people I run across who still buy into the idea that tongues is an evidence of salvation. They base it on Mark 16:17, which says, **“And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents and if they drink anything deadly it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.** I don't know why they pick tongues as a sign of salvation when they could have just as easily picked handling snakes. Maybe its because they have a phobia of snakes. ☺ But that passage is not talking about one proof that we are saved. It is talking about the fact that believers

enter into the realm of the supernatural in New Testament times, which can be manifested in many different ways. He's just giving examples. And we will look at this realm of the supernatural toward the end of this sermon. But they will respond, "Well, what about Acts 19? The disciples believe in verse 4, get baptized in verse 5, and speak in tongues in verse 6? Case closed – when you get saved you speak in tongues." But I think I have already demonstrated that their exegesis is incorrect. These disciples were saved in verse 1 and don't speak in tongues until verse 6. Tongues did not accompany their salvation. It came much later.

2. This rules out baptismal regeneration

Somewhat more common is the belief that *baptism* saves you and/or regenerates you. Some of the smaller denominations go so far as to say that you can't be saved unless you are immersed by *their* pastor, with the *right* formula in *their* church. But all views of baptismal regeneration are ruled out by this passage because verse 1 indicates that they were believers in verse 1 and not baptized until verse 5.

Well... maybe not quite closed: One variation on this heresy is the view that says these disciples *were* truly believers in verse 1, but since John didn't know to baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, their baptism didn't "take"; they were not yet regenerated and filled with the Holy Spirit. You can see why this would be a favorite passage. They say that you can believe but still not be saved until you are baptized.

But there are three things we can say about that: First, Scripture makes clear that people must be regenerated before they can believe. We discussed some of the passages when we looked at Lydia, whose heart the Lord opened (there's regeneration) so that she attended to the things spoken by Paul (there's faith).

Second, their interpretation doesn't even fit the order of events in this passage. Paul's laying on of hands in verse 6 is not the baptism. Verse 5 is. They had already been baptized in verse 5 before they received the Spirit's gifts in verse 6. So if they are equating regeneration with the receiving of the Spirit, verse 6 should have happened at the moment that verse 5 happened, not afterwards as a separate event. So that disproves baptismal regeneration all by itself.

Third, we've already seen that they really *were* saved in verse 1 before they were baptized in verse 5. Enough said on that theory. There are several other theories that are ruled out by this first principle. But if you are convinced (as I am) that verse 1 is describing true believers, then verse 5 is not a baptism upon getting saved. It is something else.

B. It is not teaching that these men were not rebaptized (i.e., that verse 5 is continuing with the words of Paul, and that John the Baptist baptized in the name of Jesus

But this has put other people in a real pickle. It doesn't bother those of us who believe in rebaptism. But Reformed people who absolutely do not believe in rebaptism have fallen into two camps. The first group has been convinced by the evidence we have just looked at under point A, and they are so intent on not being Anabaptists (in other words, those who baptize again) that they are forced to say that verse 5 is not talking about a rebaptism. They say that you shouldn't end the quote of Paul in verse 4. They put the ending quotation marks at the end of verse 5 and say that Paul was still describing what John said and did. According to them, verse 5 means that *John the Baptist* baptized the people in the name Jesus; that Paul did not baptize them.

But this is so convoluted an interpretation that most people have abandoned it. That is not the most natural way of reading either the Greek or the English. Second, the Greek pronoun "they" in verse 5 is obviously the same referent as the "they" in verse 6. I think that is a deadly argument against this view. Third, if verse 5 is John's baptism, then verse 5 is tautology of verse 4, something hard for most people to swallow. And there are other arguments that I could give. But I think we have to come to the conclusion that this is a rebaptism, however uncomfortable it might make us feel.

1. This rules out a cavalier use of Ephesians 4:5 to oppose any rebaptisms (that passage is talking about the baptism of the Spirit, not water baptism).

If that is true, and these people were indeed baptized again, then I would suggest two things. First, the PCA's majority position is correct. Those who grew up unbelievers in apostate denominations should be rebaptized, and Ephesians 4:5 should not be used against the majority PCA position. Ephesians 4:4-5 says, "**There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.**" That's the passage that Hodge would use to say, there can be only one baptism. My position is that the one baptism is talking about an invisible baptism, just as the one body is talking about the invisible church. Everything in those two verses is invisible. To insert water into that passage gets us in trouble just as inserting water in Romans 6 gets us into trouble. He is not talking about one water baptism, but one Spirit baptism. I know this is

tedious, but every single point is essential to getting us where we need to be. So point B – this is a rebaptism, and Ephesians 4:5 can't be cavalierly used to prove only one baptism.¹

2. This rules out the over-objectified view of baptism in Auburn Avenue circles.

A second thing that my interpretation would rule out is the over-objectified view of baptism that you see in Auburn Avenue circles. The Auburn Avenue theologians don't ever want to see a rebaptism. They say that all baptized people must be treated as brothers in Christ who should make good on their baptism. In one of Doug Wilson's debates he said that Rome is in the New Covenant, that they have not been excommunicated, and therefore must be seen as brothers in the Lord, heirs of grace and headed to heaven, even though they are errant brothers. I utterly reject such a view. They hang way too much on baptism. For them, baptism ushers us into God's saving grace. I believe this is one of several passages that contradict such a view. Water baptism is a symbol, not the once-for-ever reality.

Second, Paul treated them as believers before they were rebaptized. Third, Luke treated them as true believers and disciples before they were rebaptized. On the totally objective view of the covenant, none of that makes sense. So I think this is a powerful passage against Auburn Avenue theology.

C. It is not teaching that all those baptized by John got rebaptized

1. Jesus (Matt 3:13)

But they do have an objection. Those who vigorously oppose rebaptism of Roman Catholics and apostates will try to drive a huge wedge between John's Baptism and Christian Baptism, saying that they are totally different things. Rome certainly says this. The Council of Trent said, "If any one saith, that the baptism of John had the same force as the baptism of Christ: let him be anathema." The Reformers disagreed. They insisted that John's baptism was essentially the same as Christian baptism. And the early

¹ I would also point out that Hebrews 6:2 does indeed speak of the doctrine of baptisms as being a foundational Christian doctrine. The other side on the debate insists that the baptisms are Old Testament Jewish baptisms. Why? Because they are plural. But in context, it has to refer to Christian baptisms that form the foundation of their faith. They are so immature that the writer has to teach them these foundational doctrines again.

church also disagreed with the Romanists and agreed with the Reformers. Tertullian (who lived from 155-222 AD) said, “There is no difference between those whom John baptized in the Jordan, and Peter in the Tiber.”² Some of you may be lost in this debate, and wondering why we have to wrestle through this passage, but Rome had a lot hanging on trying to make a difference between the two, and the Reformers believed they had a lot hanging on believing that there was an identity between the two. So it is an important subject.

But if you will look at Point C, you will see that I am convinced that this passage is not teaching that all those baptized by John got rebaptized – some did, and some did not. In fact, I think this is the only clear example of John’s disciples who got rebaptized. Let’s look at the evidence. Matthew 3:13 indicates that Jesus was baptized by John, and it is clear that He did not get rebaptized. That may not prove a lot, but it definitely connects John’s baptism with Christ’s own. And the Reformers insisted on that.

2. Disciples (compare John 1:35-42 with John 4:2)

Next, turn with me to John 1. Let’s start reading at verse 35.

John 1:35 ¶ Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples.

John 1:36 And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, “Behold the Lamb of God!”

John 1:37 ¶ The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

So John is in effect telling his disciples that this is the one whom he has been preaching about. This is the Messiah to whom his baptism has been pointing and preparing. So they naturally follow Jesus. He’s not been making them into followers of himself. He’s been making them into followers of Jesus. Which brings up the strange thing in Acts 19 – why have these men not been diligent to find this Jesus? Verse 38:

John 1:38 Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, “What do you seek?” They said to Him, “Rabbi” (which is to say, when translated, Teacher), “where are You staying?”

John 1:39 ¶ He said to them, “Come and see.” They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour).

John 1:40 ¶ One of the two who heard John *speak*, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother.

² Tertullian, *On Baptism* 4, ANF 3:671.

John 1:41 He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated, the Christ).

John 1:42 And he brought him to Jesus. ¶ Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, “You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas” (which is translated, A Stone).

What we see here are disciples of John who are becoming disciples of Jesus. And there were other disciples of John who became Christ’s disciples. If they had to be baptized again, who baptized them? You might say, “Jesus.” But turn next to John 4:1-2.

John 4:1 Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John

John 4:2 (though Jesus Himself *did not baptize*, but His disciples),

In this passage we see that there were people from Israel who were being baptized to become disciples. To be a disciple meant to study under someone and learn the ropes of the true faith. If I baptized a new convert, it would be my responsibility to disciple this person and mature him in the faith. That’s what both John and Jesus were doing. But notice verse 2 says that *Jesus did not baptize anyone*. The Reformers said that this is proof positive that none of the twelve apostles were rebaptized. If Jesus baptized no one, there wouldn’t have *been* anyone to rebaptize them. Though it is not as clear, the Reformers also tried to provide evidence that the 120 in the upper room in Acts 1, and the 500 that Jesus appeared to after His resurrection were not rebaptized (1 Cor. 15:6).

3. Apollos (Acts 18:24-28)

The last reference that I have is of Apollos in the last chapter. There is no indication that he was rebaptized in that chapter. People like Calvin who have focused on the unity of this baptism have tended to deny that a baptism took place in chapter 19. Others who insist that all of John’s disciples had to be rebaptized, tend to read baptism back into chapter 18, even though there is no indication that it ever happened.

So even though this is not a rock-solid point, I think the evidence favors the fact that not all of John’s disciples were rebaptized. In fact, this passage is the only record that we have of any of John’s disciples being rebaptized.

D. It is not teaching that John's baptism is something different from Christian baptism

1. John's baptism was a baptism of repentance (v. 4; Matt 3:11), but so was Christian baptism (Acts 2:38). Both John (Matt 3:2) and Jesus (Matt 4:17) had a message of "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt 3:2; 4:17).

The fourth thing that I am convinced of is that John's baptism is not something essentially different from Christian baptism. It is different in that it looked forward to Christ and ours looks backward. But in terms of its essential meaning, I agree with the Reformers. It is the same baptism, and unless people are cut off from the covenant community, there is no need to get rebaptized. That gives a hint already of my views of what happened in this chapter. And this is one of quite a few proofs that I have of why I believe people should be rebaptized if they come from Roman Catholicism or some other apostate organization or if they have been outside the church for twenty years like these people were.

Let me repeat what Tertullian said: "There is no difference between those whom John baptized in the Jordan, and Peter in the Tiber."³ If you want to read an extended treatment of this, I recommend that you read Turretin, volume 3, pages 399 and following. But let me quickly go through this material:

People will look at verse 4 and say that John's baptism was a baptism of repentance, and Christ's baptism was a baptism of faith. I hear Baptists say this all the time. They drive a wedge between the two just like the Roman Catholics do. But it is a false contrast. For one thing, faith and repentance are two sides of the same coin. You cannot turn to God unless you have turned from something. "Turning from" is the repentance and "turning to" is the faith. But wherever you have one you will have the other.

Secondly, Acts 2:38 makes clear that Christian baptism is every bit as much a baptism of repentance as John's was. Let me read it for you. Peter said, "**Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**" It is an antinomian Christianity that completely removes repentance from their vocabulary. But it is part and parcel of Christianity. Turn with me to Matthew 3:1-2, where we see this message of repentance from the lips of John the Baptist.

³ Tertullian, *On Baptism* 4, ANF 3:671.

Matthew 3:1 In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, Matthew 3:2 and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!”

Now look at Matthew 4:17 where we see a summary of Christ’s message.

Matthew 4:17 ¶ From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

It’s an identical message. Nor is John the Baptist’s message without good news and faith. In fact, Mark 1 calls it the beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ. Flip back to Acts 19:4. I think this is quite clear here. Verse 4 says, “**John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that *they should believe on Him* who would come after him...**” So it is not only a baptism of repentance, but also a baptism of faith – of believing in Jesus.

2. Both were instituted by God (John 1:33; Lk. 3:2-3; Mt 21:25), and therefore John’s baptism was just as much a baptism “from heaven” (Matt. 21:25; Mark 11:30; Luke 20:4).

Point 2 gives plenty of Scripture to show that both John’s baptism and Christian baptism were instituted by God. I won’t go through those. Jesus insisted that John’s baptism was from heaven. He approved of John’s baptism. He did not drive a wedge between the two.

3. Both pointed to the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:11; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; 2:38; 10:47; 11:15-18)

Third, both baptisms pointed to the Holy Spirit. Let me just read one of the Scriptures there. Acts 11:15-18. And as I read this, I want you to notice three things: 1) Peter ties his baptism with John’s baptism; 2) second Peter shows that Christian baptism points to Spirit baptism exactly like John’s did; 3) third, he links repentance to baptism.

Acts 11:15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning.

Acts 11:16 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 11:17 If therefore God gave them the same gift as *He gave us* when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?”

Acts 11:18 ¶ When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, “Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life.”

I don't think you could get a clearer testimony to the fact that John's baptism and Christian baptism mean the same thing. If you once are convinced of these points that we have been going through, a lot of modern controversies are solved.

4. Both require faith in the Messiah (Matt 21:32; Acts 19:4; Acts 2:41; 18:8)

Fourth, both required faith in the Messiah. I will only read verse 4 of Acts 19.

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.”

John's message was no different from Paul's message.

5. Both were a sign of separation from the world and being united to the true body of believers (Matt 3:5-12; Luke 3:3-17; Acts 2:40-42)

Fifth, both baptisms were a sign of separation from an apostate Judaism and from the world and being united with the body of believers. Matthew 3:5-12 shows John calling people out of Israel and forming a new community of faith. Well, Acts 2:40-42 does the same. It says,

Acts 2:40 ¶ And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation.” [He is calling them to leave Judaism]

Acts 2:41 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.

Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

This is the same thing we do with Roman Catholics: We call them to leave the Roman Catholic Church, to get rebaptized and to join the fellowship of believers. Why do Romanists insist that these two baptisms are so different? If they didn't, they could not maintain their false doctrine that baptism saves. They knew that John's baptism didn't save. Why do Baptists frequently insist on separating John's baptism from Christian baptism? If they didn't, they could not maintain their practice of excluding infants. If you study the literature on proselyte baptism, you will see that it always included infants; it

included the whole family. But point-by-point I hope you are seeing that they are essentially the same.

6. John was ushering people into the kingdom of heaven (Matt 11:12), and these true disciples were not excluded by Jesus (Mark 9:39-41; Luke 9:49-50).

The last point is that John was ushering the people into the kingdom of heaven according to Matthew 11:12 in a provisional fashion, and so does Christian baptism. Matthew 11:12 says, “**And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing and forceful men lay hold of it.**” (NIV) But is that any different from Christian baptism? Acts 8:12 says, **as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized.** Ultimately, baptism is an initiatory rite symbolizing the Spirit’s empowering for kingdom living, whether that refers to initial regeneration or to later empowerings – it is pointing to the need for the Spirit in the kingdom.

E. It is not teaching a “contradiction” between the baptisms of Paul and the baptisms of the Great Commission (Matt 28:19)

A couple of other things that this passage does not teach: It is not teaching a “contradiction” between the baptisms of Paul and the baptisms of the Great Commission. I have recently had some debates with “Oneness Pentecostals” (and others) who deny the doctrine of the Trinity. And they insist that Matthew 28:19 must have been added to the Bible later on, when it says, “**Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.**” They have no good evidence, but they insist that that can’t be part of Scripture. They will point to this passage and say, “Paul didn’t do it in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. He did it in the name of Jesus.” Look at verse 5 “**When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.**” They insist that you aren’t properly baptized unless the words that are used are, “I baptize you in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

What are we to say to that? Well, fortunately, we have a church document written before the fall of Jerusalem (probably written about 64-66 AD). It is called the Didache. And it says in one place that unless people are baptized in the name of the Lord they cannot partake of the Lord’s Supper (9:5). (And in context it is clearly referring to the name of the Lord Jesus.)

But then it goes on to give the proper formula for baptizing in the name of the Lord Jesus. It says,

7:1 But concerning baptism, baptize in this way: having first recited all these precepts, baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, in running water;

7:3 ... pour water three times on the head, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Here's the point: they didn't see any contradiction with saying that we should baptize in the name of the Lord and to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Why? Because all three Persons bear the same name – Jehovah. Jesus means, "Jehovah saves." But all three Persons have the same name. As Zechariah 14:9 says, "**The LORD is one and His name one.**" Father, Son and Holy Spirit are titles, not names. Their name is Jehovah. And when Acts uses the term "Lord" for Jesus, it is the Greek translation for the name Jehovah in the Old Testament. So when verse 5 says, "**they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus,**" it is saying that Jesus is Jehovah, and they were baptizing in the name of Jehovah Jesus. There is no contradiction because Jesus is Jehovah. We are baptizing into that name that belongs to all three Persons.

F. It did not mean that John did not teach about the Holy Spirit

1. He clearly taught about the coming of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:11; Mk. 1:8; Luke 3:16)

Let me address one last thing that this passage is not teaching. You can see that this passage really has been twisted and abused. But this particular misunderstanding is understandable based on the New King James translation. Acts 19:2 says, "**We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.**" Some people say that these disciples had no idea that the third Person of the Trinity was even a reality. They claim that these people were not Trinitarian. But most commentaries point out that this translation is extremely unlikely to be correct. It is extremely unlikely that disciples of John would have never heard about the Holy Spirit. He clearly taught about the Holy Spirit, saying about the Messiah, "**He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit...**" (Matt 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16). That was the whole point of His ministry. His baptism pointed to Jesus' baptism with the Spirit.

2. This was the fulfillment of OT prophecy (Ezek. 36:21-28; Joel 2:28-32; Zech. 12:10)

But more to the point, it is inconceivable that any Jew of that day would not have heard that there is such a thing as a Holy Spirit, since the Old Testament spoke of the Holy Spirit over and over again. You can't even read the first chapter of the Bible without hearing about the "Spirit of God." From the first book to the last book of the Old Testament, the Spirit was present.

3. The Holy Spirit was not yet "historically" been given (John 7:39) just as the Messiah in whom they trusted had not yet been crucified when John preached.

But here is the point. The Old Testament prophesied that there would be a unique *coming of the Holy Spirit* in power at Pentecost, and that from that point on, God's people would have an access to the Spirit that very few saints in the Old Testament did. Ezekiel 36, Joel 2, Zechariah 12 and other passages prophesied about this.

4. So some translate this, "we did not even hear if [the] Holy Spirit was [come]."

But there is a very easy solution that most commentaries take: the Greek of Acts 19:2 can be rendered "We did not even hear if the Holy Spirit was come." They knew that John had promised his coming. That was the whole point of his baptism. But they hadn't heard anything about the coming of the Spirit. "You mean He's here?!" They hadn't heard that those prophecies had been fulfilled. They were living a substandard Christianity.

III. Why did Luke include this passage?

A. This passage corrects our views on whether salvation can occur outside the church (v. 1)

With all of that as a background, I think you can understand why this passage is very helpful. I love this passage – at least now that I understand it. Very quickly, let's apply each verse to the present (at least the applications that I haven't given already). Verse 1 corrects our views on whether salvation can occur outside the church. The Confession says that ordinarily there is no salvation outside the church. But notice the word "ordinarily." There are some modern churches that insist that everyone outside the church visible is going to hell. Well, this passage contradicts that. These twelve men had been outside the visible church for twenty years. And we are going to

run across people who haven't been in church, but are still saved. Even though they may have a substandard Christianity, we can seek their good and encourage them to come into the church. Rebaptizing them indicates that it is a serious issue to be outside the church. You are outside the protective canopy of the covenant. You have essentially excommunicated yourself. But yes, they can be saved. 1 Corinthians 5:5 gives another example of a saved person who is outside the church (because he was excommunicated). Yet Paul was clear that on this particular occasion, the person would be saved. The church must treat such a person "like a heathen and a tax collector" (Matt 18:17), but subjectively they may be saved.

B. This passage makes us sensitive to nativistic movements (v. 2) and keeps us from being legalistic or formulaic on how God works

Secondly, when you are involved in missions, you see this kind of thing happening all the time. And frequently they have the same kind of errors that verse 2 shows. We call it nativistic movements. Let me give you an example that I ran across in India. A man found a Bible, got saved by reading it, and spent the next few years reading the Bible to relatives, neighbors and others who came flocking to him from the Dalit community. Before he even met a regular Christian, he had started seven churches of people who simply read the Bible and tried to follow it. In fact, there were thousands that he had led to Christ. Were there some issues and problems? Yes there were. But once they met Christian leaders, they quickly got disciplined out of them. God sometimes works outside the normal paths of the church. It shouldn't surprise us.

Here's another story. A pastor in Venezuela was traveling through the jungle and stumbled upon a whole village of Christians. He knew that no missionaries had been to that remote area, so he asked them how they became Christians. Apparently a young man had taken goods to trade at a remote market, and had been handed a Bible. When he returned, everyone in the village took a keen interest in this book. As they read through the book, everyone in the village received Christ as Lord and Savior. The pastor went on to explain that there were only three errors that this strange group had adopted: 1) they worshipped on Saturday instead of Sunday, 2) they abstained from pork and 3) they killed all their dogs because the Bible said, "Beware of dogs" in Philippians 3:2. They took that literally!

Some nativistic movements are so far out that they are heretical. One remote group in China had a man who sacrificed his son because he thought that's what the story of Abraham mandated. But what almost always

happens in these groups is that they are so open to the truth in the Bible that they change as soon as they can see that the Bible says something. O that we in America would be so quick to do so. O that we would have the humility to change quickly like Apollos did, and like these twelve did.

But another reason I bring this up because we like to have everything neat and tidy in Presbyterianism. You can't be a pastor without a Bachelor of Arts, a Master of Divinity and a working knowledge of Hebrew and Greek. Well, you won't get too far planting churches among the Dalits of India or among the pygmies of Africa if you don't flex with the Spirit's sovereign movings. Scripture is much more flexible than we tend to be. And so I think this is a rebuke to a legalistic and formulaic approach to Christianity that we sometimes tend to have.

C. This passage corrects the idea that the baptism of the Spirit is received by works rather than faith (v. 2; see Gal. 3:1-3)

The third thing that this passage corrects is the idea that the baptism of the Spirit is received by works rather than by faith. And this is very common. Ray Hughes says, "...faith alone is not sufficient. The temple (body) must be prepared for the receptions of the Spirit."⁴ And by that he means that we have got to purify ourselves to be ready for the Spirit. Riggs says that the conditions are regeneration, obedience, prayer and *then* faith.⁵ Well if that was true, why did the Corinthians have more spiritual gifts than any other church? They didn't meet those conditions. And it's not just Pentecostals who have this error. Ockenga, an advocate of the Higher Life movement, says, "There are five elements in this formula by which we may appropriate Pentecost. They are confession, consecration, prayer, faith and obedience."⁶

But Paul gives no indication of those steps. In verse 2 he simply says, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" Paul expects faith in Christ to go hand in hand with reception of the Spirit. And the fact that the Spirit had not baptized them was an oddity. Let me read to you Galatians 3:1-3.

⁴ "Glossolalia in Contemporary Times," in *The Glossolalia Phenomenon*, ed. Wade H. Horton (Cleveland, Tenn: Pathway, 1966), p. 169. Taken from Bruner, p. 109, footnote, 73.

⁵ Cited in Bruner, p. 107, footnote 70.

⁶ *The Spirit of the Living God*, New York: Fleming, H. Revell, 1947, pp. 138. Cited in Bruner, p. 116, footnote 82, last paragraph.

Galatians 3:1 O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified?

Galatians 3:2 This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

Galatians 3:3 Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?

He is saying that the Spirit is received by faith, and our continued maturity must also be lived by faith. Faith receives what is promised from God's throne. There is no earning of the Spirit or making ourselves more worthy. It is by faith.

D. This passage corrects the idea that the baptism of the Spirit usually occurs as a second work of grace (v. 2 – “when you believed”; see Acts 2:38-39)

The fourth thing this passage corrects is the idea that the baptism of the Spirit always occurs as a second work of grace. Some people promote a two-stage Christianity – a carnal stage and a higher life that you step into. Now I will admit that this passage *does* indicate that for *these* men it was a second work of grace. But that is not the norm, as can be seen by Paul's comments in verse 2. “...he said to them, ‘Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?’” Notice those words, “when you believed.” That is when God has ordained for it to normally happen. Acts 2 shows apostles who were baptized as a second work of grace because Acts is a transitional book. But in Acts 2:38-39 Peter gives what should be the norm: “**Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.’**” That passage indicates that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a promise to all who are called by God, and that it is received by faith just as salvation is received by faith. The two go together ordinarily.

E. This passage corrects the idea that the baptism of the Spirit always has to occur at conversion – God is sovereign (vv. 1,6; see Acts 1:8; 2:1-47; 8:15-17; 9:17)

But to be balanced, I think we can't be formulaic about this. We Reformed people like to insist that it is always at conversion. I think the best we can say is that this is God's norm. Now true, this is a transitional book, and so maybe from that time on the Baptism of the Spirit happens at

conversion. That's what I tend to believe. But there are several exceptions in this book. Acts 1:8 promises apostles (who had been saved for years) that they would be Baptized in the Spirit not many days hence. Of course, Acts 2 shows 120 saved disciples who get baptized by the Spirit. Acts 8 shows people who had been saved for several days before the Spirit of God baptized them. And this is another example.

If it distresses you that God can't be pigeonholed, get used to it. You can't put God in a box and say, "God can only work the way my systematic theology says He will work." When was John the Baptist baptized by the Spirit? In the womb? I tell you, God is sovereign, and I am nervous about anyone who says God can't do something unless God has clearly, clearly said so.

So the question comes, if the Baptism of the Spirit didn't save these people, what did it accomplish? 1 Corinthians 12-14 indicates that one of the things it accomplishes is that it gives us Spiritual gifts. Some people are given the gift of hospitality, others of service, others helps, teaching, tongues. And God's ordinary pattern is that every new believer has at least a beginning set of gifts. God can add other gifts later, but He usually begins us with at least some spiritual gifts. But the Baptism of Spirit ushers us into the supernatural realm of kingdom living. Usually He ushers us in the moment we are born into the kingdom, and along with that regeneration He ordinarily gives us power for kingdom living.

Now let me give you a secret if you are concerned: you really don't need to figure out this baptism thing. What begins as a once for all baptism can be sought repeatedly as a filling. Ephesians commands us to keep getting filled with the Spirit. But this point is just that God is sovereign over timing. Verse 2 indicates what we ought to *usually* expect, but verse 6 cautions us about putting God into a box.

F. This passage corrects those who bail out of the church once the leader is gone (v. 4; see 1 Cor. 1:13-17; 10:2)

Point F – This passage corrects those who bail out of the church once the leader is gone. I believe that Paul is hitting the nail on the head with the problem that these men were having in verse 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.'**" He was saying that John was pointing beyond himself. In some sense these believers must have believed that, or Luke would not have called them disciples. But what is weird about this situation is that these people had been following John for twenty years after John was dead. They had been

following John even though John's ministry was ended. They had followed John, but had failed to follow John's admonition to follow Christ. For twenty years they had neglected the church.

G. This passage corrects our views on rebaptism (v. 5)

That didn't make them unsaved, but it did make them outside the kingdom for twenty years. And that's why they needed to be rebaptized. Why didn't Apollos get rebaptized? Because he had been preaching Christ, not John. He had been associating with the body of believers. He only needed additional instruction. In contrast, these disciples apparently lacked the power, the spirit, the love of the brethren and other things that made Apollos powerful. They needed to be incorporated into the church and baptized by the Spirit.

In the same way, it is my view that any who have spent years in an apostate denomination such as Rome, or the PCUSA or the Methodist Church, should ordinarily be rebaptized, unless of course the local church was Bible believing. The reason is that those denominations have been excommunicated. They have been cut off from the visible kingdom. Once they are apostate, they are in the same status as Israel was when John called people to come out of her and be separate. Keep in mind that this is not a unanimous opinion in Reformed circles.⁷ It is the majority opinion in the PCA, and in at least three other Presbyterian denominations. But it's not at the core of what we believe. So if you disagree, that's fine. I won't insist on it.

H. This passage calls Christians to live in the realm of the supernatural (vv. 2-3,6)

But I want to end with one more application. This passage calls Christians to live in the realm of the supernatural. Verses 2-3 imply that Paul saw something lacking about their Christianity. Verse 6 says, "**And when**

⁷ Those who have tended to emphasize the fact that baptism replaces circumcision point out that a Jew couldn't get recircumcized. It was a one-time action. On the other hand, those who emphasize the connection of New Testament baptism with Old Testament baptism will see a need to rebaptize those who have been cut off from the covenant. When apostate Jews would come back to the faith, they were not recircumcized, but they were rebaptized, and their rebaptism was called a circumcision. Interestingly, early Christians called baptism a circumcision. For more on Old Testament baptism and its relationship to New Testament baptism, see Phillip Kayser, *Infant Baptism* (Omaha: Biblical Blueprints, 1990), Appendix B: "Infant Baptism Started With Moses."

Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.” It was almost like a new Pentecost there. Though we believe that prophecy ceased with the first century, the supernatural did not cease. We still need God’s Spirit to give us power to war against the world, the flesh and the devil. Lord willing, we will look at some of the miracles and spiritual warfare of Paul later in this chapter. But this verse is one of many in the book of Acts that indicates that the Spirit of God is needed for kingdom living.

If your life is a constant series of failures, is powerless, lacks joy and is substandard, look to Jesus to give you a fresh infilling of His Spirit. We don’t need to solve the question of whether you have been baptized with the Spirit yet. I will assume that you have. But the filling that His baptism started is a filling we need to seek every single day. The Bible doesn’t just call us to get filled once. The apostles were baptized by the Spirit in Acts 2. That was a once and forever event. That chapter also says that they were “filled.” That was the first time they were filled. But in Acts 4, in response to intense prayer for power and boldness, it says, **“And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.”**

The apostles were filled again and again in the book of Acts. And this is my prayer for each of you – a fresh infilling of God’s Spirit every day. Fresh power to love your spouse and your children sacrificially. Fresh supernatural power to return good for evil, blessing for cursing and to overcome evil with love. I’ve included a prayer for filling in your outline that has every sentence based upon the Scripture. I would urge you to pray that prayer. Pray it every day. May you find great joy and power as you do so. Amen.

The following prayer was placed in the handout given to the congregation:

Prayer for the Filling of the Spirit

Pray to the Father for the Spirit’s filling

Father, your word has promised that if we ask for the Spirit, you will give of the Spirit far more readily than parents give the necessities of life to their children. I lay claim to the “how much more” of Luke 11:13 and ask that you would give to me an extra portion of the Spirit’s presence for today. I need the Spirit because you have commanded me to “walk in the Spirit” (Gal. 5:16) in everything that I do. Help me to “sing in the Spirit” (1 Cor. 14:15), to “worship...in the Spirit” (Phil. 3:3) and to “rejoice in the Holy

Spirit” (1 Thes. 1:6; Rom. 14:17). Please help me to “pray in the Spirit” (Jude 20; Eph. 6:18) since I do not know what I should pray for as I ought (Rom. 8:26). Help me to “love in the Spirit” (Col. 1:18), be “led by the Spirit” (Matt. 4:1; Rom. 8:14; Gal. 5:18), be “moved by the Spirit” (Luke 2:27), be “compelled by the Spirit” (Acts 20:22 NIV) and to have my “mind controlled by the Spirit” (Rom. 8:6). May every part of me be controlled by the Spirit (Rom. 8:6,9) so that I might “live in the Spirit” (Gal. 5:25; Rom. 8:13). I want to be taught by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:13), to speak by the Spirit since “no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:3). Wash and sanctify me by the Spirit (1 Cor. 6:11).

I know that Paul’s prayer in Ephesians 1:17-20 is according to your will, and I ask that the reality of your transforming power would work in my life today:

... that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places...

I do not ask this because I deserve it, but because I am united to Christ and He has purchased everything that is necessary to my full enjoyment of the Spirit. I ask it simply because you have promised the Spirit to those who come in faith (Galatians 3:1-5; Luke 11:13). Thank you for your gracious gift, Father. I love you and praise you. May the Spirit cause me to glorify you today.

Pray to Jesus for the Spirit’s filling

Lord Jesus, you are the vine and we are the branches (John 15:1-8). I acknowledge that my life flows from you, and that without you I can do nothing (v. 5). I know that you were given the Holy Spirit “without measure.” I ask that you would release your life into my life that I might bear fruit. Release your strength, wisdom, healing [etc.] to meet the needs of this day. You have said that all who drink of you will never thirst since they will have within them a fountain of living water that never grows dry (John 4:14). I need that for my dryness. I lay claim to your promise in John 7:37-39:

...If anyone thirst, 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 the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Lord, since you have been glorified, and everything necessary has been done that we might receive the Spirit, I pray that the Holy Spirit would be poured out upon me today. This passage says that “anyone” who thirsts may come to drink and will receive. Lord, I come to you and I now drink of you. Thank you for your gift of the Spirit. Thank you for your life giving waters.

Pray to the Holy Spirit for His filling

Holy Spirit, I invite you now to fill me afresh with the fire of your love. I want to know you, not just know about you. I want to experience your presence in my life. I give

myself to you and ask that you would give yourself to me. I need your power in my life. Please come, and fill me now. Come into my life as the “Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD” (Is. 11:2). I need those things in my life. I am your bondservant and I come humbly to be controlled and moved by you. Whatever giftings you want to pour out in my life today (1 Corinthians 12-14; Ephesians 4:7ff; Romans 12:3-8; 1 Pet. 4:9-11), I gladly receive and determine now to use to the glory of the Father. I will not limit your gifts by my perceptions of what I can handle, or what I need. I receive your sovereign will to give as you please. Work in me mightily to the glory of God.

Fill me with your gracious fruit. Help me to walk in the Spirit that I might not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. I lay claim to your supernatural love that can love the unlovable. I lay claim to your joy of the Lord, which is my strength. I lay claim to Your peace that passes all understanding; your longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Help me to do everything today by your working, that you would replace my evil thinking with the mind of Christ, my rebellious will with the will of Christ, my unruly emotions with the compassion of Christ.

Flow through me to minister to others. Please flood the deepest places of my life, washing away the filth and replacing it with the righteousness of Christ. Cleanse my wounds that still tend to dominate my thoughts and are keeping me from emotional freedom. Help me to know Christ and the power of His resurrection.

I want to learn more and more what it means to walk in the Spirit. May I not lift so much as a straw from the ground without your presence, love and approval.

By faith thank God that he has done so

By faith, I thank you even now that you have answered this prayer and have poured out your Spirit in my life. Praise be to your name! Praise be to your name! I love you and thank you. In Jesus name, Amen.

What to do with Substandard Christianity?

Acts 19:1-7 • August 31, 2008

Outline and prayer by Phillip G. Kayser

Intro:

- I. Luke is thematically connecting this event with Acts 18:24-28 (v. 1a)
 - A. The explicit mention of Apollos (v. 1)
 - B. Both show people who only know the baptism of John – Apollos (18:25) and the twelve (19:3).
 - C. Both show people lacking something – Apollos (18:26) and the twelve (19:4).
 - D. Both show people who were saved and used by God and accurately know some basics – Apollos (18:24-26a) and the twelve (19:1b-2a)
 1. Objection: some say that the word “disciples” could mean that they were “disciples” of John (Matt 9:14; 11:2; Mark 2:18; Luke 5:33; 7:18,19; John 1:35; 4:1)
 2. Answer: A disciple of John is pointed to Jesus just as a disciple of Paul was.
 - a) A disciple of John was taught to follow the coming Messiah (John 1:35-39; 3:22-36; Mark 1:7-8)
 - b) Mark does not begin the Gospel after the resurrection. “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ” is John’s preaching (Mark 1:1-8)
 - c) The message of John and Jesus was identical – John (Matt 3:2) and Jesus (Matt 4:17).
 - d) Just as all disciples of Paul were disciples of Jesus (“imitate me just as I also imitate Christ” – 1 Cor. 11:1), all disciples of John were disciples of the coming Messiah
 - e) The question is, how does Luke use the term “disciple” in Acts: he always uses the term to indicate saved Christians (v. 9,30; see 1:15; 6:1,2,7; 9:1,10,19,25,26,36,38; 11:26,29; 13:52; 14:20,21,22,28; 15:10; 16:1; 18:23,27; 19:9,30; 20:1,7,30; 21:4,16)
 - f) Paul certainly assumes that they are believers (v. 2 – “when you believed”), but Luke by inspiration declares that they were already believers (“v. 1 - disciples)
 - E. I conclude that Luke wants us to think of these twelve as being in the same category as Apollos.
- II. What this passage is not teaching
 - A. It is not teaching us how to get saved since they were already saved (v. 1b)
 1. This rules out the older Pentecostal view that you aren’t saved unless you speak in tongues.
 2. This rules out baptismal regeneration
 - B. It is not teaching that these men were not rebaptized (i.e., that verse 5 is continuing with the words of Paul, and that John the Baptist baptized in the name of Jesus)
 1. This rules out a cavalier use of Ephesians 4:5 to oppose any rebaptisms (that passage is talking about the baptism of the Spirit, not water baptism).
 2. This rules out the over-objectified view of baptism in Auburn Avenue circles.
 - C. It is not teaching that all those baptized by John got rebaptized
 1. Jesus (Matt 3:13)
 2. Disciples (compare John 1:35-42 with John 4:2)
 3. Apollos (Acts 18:24-28)
 - D. It is not teaching that John’s baptism is something different from Christian baptism
 1. John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance (v. 4; Matt 3:11), but so was Christian baptism (Acts 2:38). Both John (Matt 3:2) and Jesus (Matt 4:17) had a message of “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt 3:2; 4:17).
 2. Both were instituted by God (John 1:33; Lk. 3:2-3; Mt 21:25), and therefore John’s baptism was just as much a baptism “from heaven” (Matt. 21:25; Mark 11:30; Luke 20:4).
 3. Both pointed to the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:11; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; 2:38; 10:47; 11:15-18)
 4. Both require faith in the Messiah (Matt 21:32; Acts 19:4; Acts 2:41; 18:8)
 5. Both were a sign of separation from the world and being united to the true body of believers (Matt 3:5-12; Luke 3:3-17; Acts 2:40-42)
 6. John was ushering people into the kingdom of heaven (Matt 11:12), and these true disciples were not excluded by Jesus (Mark 9:39-41; Luke 9:49-50).
 - E. It is not teaching a “contradiction” between the baptisms of Paul and the baptisms of the Great Commission (Matt 28:19)
 - F. It did not mean that John did not teach about the Holy Spirit
 1. He clearly taught about the coming of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:11; Mk. 1:8; Luke 3:16)
 2. This was the fulfillment of OT prophecy (Ezek. 36:21-28; Joel 2:28-32; Zech. 12:10)
 3. The Holy Spirit was not yet “historically” been given (John 7:39) just as the Messiah in whom they trusted had not yet been crucified when John preached.
 4. So some translate this, “we did not even hear if [the] Holy Spirit was [come].”
- III. Why did Luke include this passage?
 - A. This passage corrects our views on whether salvation can occur outside the church (v. 1)
 - B. This passage makes us sensitive to nativistic movements (v. 2) and keeps us from being legalistic or formulaic on how God works
 - C. This passage corrects the idea that the baptism of the Spirit is received by works rather than faith (v. 2; see Gal. 3:1-3)
 - D. This passage corrects the idea that the baptism of the Spirit usually occurs as a second work of grace (v. 2 – “when you believed”; see Acts 2:38-39)
 - E. This passage corrects the idea that the baptism of the Spirit always has to occur at conversion – God is sovereign (vv. 1,6; see Acts 1:8; 2:1-47; 8:15-17; 9:17)
 - F. This passage corrects those who bail out of the church once the leader is gone (v. 4; see 1 Cor. 1:13-17; 10:2)
 - G. This passage corrects our views on rebaptism (v. 5)
 - H. This passage calls Christians to live in the realm of the supernatural (vv. 2-3,6)

Prayer for the Filling of the Spirit

Pray to the Father for the Spirit's filling

Father, your word has promised that if we ask for the Spirit, you will give of the Spirit far more readily than parents give the necessities of life to their children. I lay claim to the "how much more" of Luke 11:13 and ask that you would give to me an extra portion of the Spirit's presence for today. I need the Spirit because you have commanded me to "walk in the Spirit" (Gal. 5:16) in everything that I do. Help me to "sing in the Spirit" (1 Cor. 14:15), to "worship...in the Spirit" (Phil. 3:3) and to "rejoice in the Holy Spirit" (1 Thes. 1:6; Rom. 14:17). Please help me to "pray in the Spirit" (Jude 20; Eph. 6:18) since I do not know what I should pray for as I ought (Rom. 8:26). Help me to "love in the Spirit" (Col. 1:18), be "led by the Spirit" (Matt. 4:1; Rom. 8:14; Gal. 5:18), be "moved by the Spirit" (Luke 2:27), be "compelled by the Spirit" (Acts 20:22 NIV) and to have my "mind controlled by the Spirit" (Rom. 8:6). May every part of me be controlled by the Spirit (Rom. 8:6,9) so that I might "live in the Spirit" (Gal. 5:25; Rom. 8:13). I want to be taught by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:13), to speak by the Spirit since "no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:3). Wash and sanctify me by the Spirit (1 Cor. 6:11).

I know that Paul's prayer in Ephesians 1:17-20 is according to your will, and I ask that the reality of your transforming power would work in my life today:

... that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places...

I do not ask this because I deserve it, but because I am united to Christ and He has purchased everything that is necessary to my full enjoyment of the Spirit. I ask it simply because you have promised the Spirit to those who come in faith (Galatians 3:1-5; Luke 11:13). Thank you for your gracious gift, Father. I love you and praise you. May the Spirit cause me to glorify you today.

Pray to Jesus for the Spirit's filling

Lord Jesus, you are the vine and we are the branches (John 15:1-8). I acknowledge that my life flows from you, and that without you I can do nothing (v. 5). I know that you were given the Holy Spirit "without measure." I ask that you would release your life into my life that I might bear fruit. Release your strength, wisdom, healing [etc.] to meet the needs of this day. You have said that all who drink of you will never thirst since they will have within them a fountain of living water that never grows dry (John 4:14). I need that for my dryness. I lay claim to your promise in John 7:37-39:

...If anyone thirst, 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 the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Lord, since you have been glorified, and everything necessary has been done that we might receive the Spirit, I pray that the Holy Spirit would be poured out upon me today. This passage says that "anyone" who thirsts may come to drink and will receive. Lord, I come to you and I now drink of you. Thank you for your gift of the Spirit. Thank you for your life giving waters.

Pray to the Holy Spirit for His filling

Holy Spirit, I invite you now to fill me afresh with the fire of your love. I want to know you, not just know about you. I want to experience your presence in my life. I give myself to you and ask that you would give yourself to me. I need your power in my life. Please come, and fill me now. Come into my life as the "Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD" (Is. 11:2). I need those things in my life. I am your bondservant and I come humbly to be controlled and moved by you. Whatever giftings you want to pour out in my life today (1 Corinthians 12-14; Ephesians 4:7ff; Romans 12:3-8; 1 Pet. 4:9-11), I gladly receive and determine now to use to the glory of the Father. I will not limit your gifts by my perceptions of what I can handle, or what I need. I receive your sovereign will to give as you please. Work in me mightily to the glory of God.

Fill me with your gracious fruit. Help me to walk in the Spirit that I might not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. I lay claim to your supernatural love that can love the unlovable. I lay claim to your joy of the Lord which is my strength. I lay claim to Your peace that passes all understanding; your longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Help me to do everything today by your working, that you would replace my evil thinking with the mind of Christ, my rebellious will with the will of Christ, my unruly emotions with the compassion of Christ.

Flow through me to minister to others. Please flood the deepest places of my life, washing away the filth and replacing it with the righteousness of Christ. Cleanse my wounds that still tend to dominate my thoughts and are keeping me from emotional freedom. Help me to know Christ and the power of His resurrection.

I want to learn more and more what it means to walk in the Spirit. May I not lift so much as a straw from the ground without your presence, love and approval.

By faith thank God that he has done so

By faith, I thank you even now that you have answered this prayer and have poured out your Spirit in my life. Praise be to your name! Praise be to your name! I love you and thank you. In Jesus name, Amen.