

***Apollos & the
Twelve Ephesian Disciples***

In Acts chapters 18 and 19 are two, back-to-back accounts of brethren that evidently lack something essential that must be corrected. Let me state from the beginning that both accounts involve the same kind of error. Whatever is required to resolve the one will also resolve the other. In the first, Aquila and Priscilla correct a man named Apollos (Ac.18.24-28) and in the second, Paul the apostle corrects a certain group of twelve disciples (Ac.19.1-7). Some say that these men are unsaved and others, that there is something wrong with their baptism. Which is it, or is it something else?

In this lesson we want to consider:

- A synopsis of Acts chapter 18.
- Paul's first question.
- Paul's second question.
- The first answer of the twelve disciples.
- The second answer of the twelve disciples.
- Was this a re-baptism?
- The constitution of a NT church?
- One question Paul never asked.

A Synopsis of Acts 18

While Paul was at Corinth or the area of Cenchrea he made a vow to be in Jerusalem for one of the great feasts of the Lord. (cf. Ac.18.18) So he will begin his journey shortly.

In verses 1, 5, and 11, the apostle Paul, and a number of brethren with him, had been in the city of Corinth for upwards a year and a half. (cf. Ac.18.11) While here a Jewish couple named Aquila and Priscilla migrated from Rome because Claudius Caesar had expelled all Jews from this city. (v.2) During this time many souls came to faith in Jesus Christ at the hearing of the gospel. (vss.8-10) Then Paul decided to leave Corinth, and with him a number of other brethren of whom were Aquila and Priscilla. So they sailed across the Aegean Sea and landed on the other side to the place that is called today the western coast of Turkey. Once ashore they traveled a short distance inland and arrived to the city of Ephesus, a city renowned for worshipping the goddess Diana. (cf. Ac.18.18, 19; 19.35) And as was Paul's custom he directly went to a synagogue of the Jews and preaches Christ to them. (cf. Ac.9.20; 13.13; **17.1-3**; 18.2, 19) The result was that the Jews desired him to stay longer so that they might hear more about this Christ which

he preached. However Paul tells them that he must leave because of his vow, but that if the will of God be so he would return. (cf. Ac.18.20, 21) So Paul and some of the brethren continued their journey to Jerusalem. They sailed the Mediterranean Sea to Caesarea, went inland to the city of Jerusalem to keep the feast, and then came to Antioch, Syria. After spending some time here Paul and his company decided to revisit the disciples in Galatia and Phrygia in order to strengthen them in the faith. (cf. Ac.18.22, 23) This itinerary probably accounts for above two years' time before Paul returns to Ephesus. During this time Aquila and Priscilla and other brethren remained at Ephesus. Then, a man named Apollos came to this great city. (cf. Ac.18.24)

A Brief Consideration Apollos

Ac 18:24 And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.

eloquent, λόγιος, only this once is this adj. in the NT.; Liddell & Scott says this is a man skilled with the use of words; probably synonymous to being a man of reason.

mighty, δυνατός, adj., and so *an able man, a powerful man, a strong man* in the Scriptures.

25 This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit (meaning that he was zealously affected in his preaching), he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.

instructed, κατηχημένος, nom. sing. masc. part. perf. pass. of the verb κατηχέω, κατά as, pertaining to + ἤχέω, verb tss. *roaring, sounding brass*; so κατηχέω is to *bring down the ears by a sounding*; from this is the English *catechize*.

fervent, ζέων, nom. sing. masc. part. pres. of the verb ζέω, which Moulton defines as *being hot, ardent, zealous*; the idea is that Apollos is zealous in his spirit not the Spirit.

26 And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly (ἀκριβέστερον, more accurately).

expounded, ἐξέθεντο, 3ppl. aor. ind. mid. of the verb ἐκτίθημι, ἐκ from, out, out of + τίθημι, to *appoint, ordain, purpose, set, set forth*; ἐκτίθημι, tss. *to cast out* (Ac.7.21), *to expound* (Ac.11.4; 18.26; 28.23); Liddell & Scott defines this as *to set out, put outside, to put out, to expose. II. to set up, to exhibit*.

We read that Apollos knew only the baptism of John. So whatever '*knew only the baptism of John*' means it does indicate that his knowledge was limited. His limited knowledge concerned the ministry of John the Baptist. His limited knowledge is reinforced with the phrase '*in the way of the Lord.*' Apollos was catechized '*in the way of the Lord,* which is a phrase in the NT that is only used with reference to John the Baptist. (cf. Mt.3.3; Mk.1.3; Lk.3.4; Jn.1.23) Now, compare that to the phrase '*the way of God.*' After Aquila and Priscilla heard Apollos preach they took him aside and expounded unto him '*the way of God*' more accurately. '*The way of God*' is only used with reference to the Lord Jesus. Apollos knew only the way of the Lord as it related to the baptism of John, but lacked the knowledge of the way of God as it related to Jesus Christ. This much we know from the text so far. Now let's read Ac.19.1-7 and turn our attention to a certain group of twelve disciples.

Ac 19:1 And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts (defined in Ac.18.23) came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples,

2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.

4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

7 And all the men were about twelve.

After more than two years Paul now returns to Ephesus and upon returning he found *certain disciples* there, and of them he asked two questions.

- 1. Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? (v.2) And,*
- 2. Unto what then were ye baptized? (v.3)*

Paul's First Question

The Holy Spirit's Work before & since Faith.

The first question Paul asks of these twelve disciples reveals that he understood that they professed faith in Christ. Paul never doubted the legitimacy of the faith of these men. Paul asked if they had received the Spirit *since* they had believed. However, the question tells us that there is something more that believers may receive of the Holy Spirit *subsequent* to their faith in Christ. Let's be sure we understand this much. There is a work which the Spirit does previous to faith and there is another work which the Spirit *may do* subsequent to faith. To the first point, there is a work which the Spirit does previous to faith.

In order to have faith in Jesus Christ we must have the Spirit of Christ.

Ro 8:9b ... Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

The Holy Spirit of God first brings the sinner to life in a spiritual resurrection so that he may have the capability to have faith in Jesus Christ. This is the new birth. The new birth, spiritual life must precede the production of the spiritual fruit of faith.

Joh 6:63 It is the spirit that quickeneth (it is the spirit of a man that is made alive [ζωοποιέω], not his flesh ...); the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

*Joh 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:
13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

So the Holy Spirit works in the sinner prior to faith. But the Spirit also works after faith. Now consider the Spirit's work after believing. This is found in Eph.1.13, 14. This Epistle to the Ephesians might have been written about six years after this Acts 19 account. Notice the words, '*after that ye believed ye were sealed ...*'.

Eph 1:13 In whom (Christ) ye (Gentiles at Ephesus!) also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation (which is their

conversion ... conversion follows the new birth): *in whom (Christ) also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,*
14 Which [Spirit] is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

sealed, ἐσφραγίσθητε, 2ppl. aor. ind. pass. of σφραγίζω, which is always tss. to seal; the noun, σφραγίς, is always tss. a seal, the seal. A seal gives authenticity or proof.

*earnest, ἀρράβων, a noun, which is transliterated from the Hebrew עֲרָבוֹן, [g]eh-rah-vōhn. The Greek is tss. with the English *earnest* ([3], 2Co.1.22; 5.5; Eph.1.14). The Hebrew עֲרָבוֹן, [g]eh-rah-vōhn, is tss. with the English *pledge* ([3], Ge.38.17, 18, 20). The Holy Spirit is the *earnest, pledge* of our inheritance. This pledge of the Holy Spirit we have until the time of the glorification, the time when we are changed from inhabiting these vile bodies at this present time and given glorious bodies like to that which our Lord Jesus presently possesses.*

Paul said in this epistle that after they had believed they were sealed; that is, they received the impress of the Spirit of God *upon them*, and this impress is an earnest or pledge of their inheritance until the time of their glorification.

What have we learned so far? The believing experience not only a work of the Holy Spirit before they have faith in Christ, but they should *know* to anticipate a subsequent work of the Holy Spirit upon *since* believing. This seems to be the problem with these twelve disciples. The next question that Paul asks explains why they hadn't received the Spirit since believing.

Paul's Second Question

Water Baptism & the Coming Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Paul understands that they had been baptized. His question, '*Unto what then were ye baptized?*' tells us this much. Of course Paul is referring to water baptism. What was the ministry of John the Baptist and what was the reason for administering water baptism?

Lu 1:17 And he (the angel telling the father of the son that should be born to him shortly, whose name shall be called 'John the Baptist') shall go before him (the Lord Jesus) in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the

hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

Later John the Baptist said,

Mr 1:8 I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.

These twelve disciples had been baptized in water. They were certainly prepared for receiving what the Lord promised to give them. They had faith in Jesus Christ and had been baptized in water. Earlier I made reference to Eph.1.13. There the text refers to the *'holy Spirit of promise.'* This is an important phrase that applies to a certain kind of people. What do we know of them to whom Paul wrote the Ephesian letter? They were baptized, believing, church related disciples. Receiving the *'holy Spirit of promise'* doesn't apply to them that have only believed. It doesn't apply necessarily to them that have also been water baptized. But it applies to them that know what Jesus Christ promised He would do. In Lk.24.49 Jesus Christ is speaking to his baptized, believing, covenanted disciples.

Lu 24:49a And, behold, I (the risen Lord speaking) send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye (καθίζω, set, sit, sit down, tarry, continue) in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power (mighty works, wonderful works, strength) from on high.

endued, ἐνδύσησθε, 2ppl. aor. subj. mid. of the verb ἐνδύω, tss. to put on, clothed, clothed in, clothed with, endued, arrayed.

power, δύναμιν, acc. sing. of δύναμις, a noun tss. power, wonderful works, mighty works, ability, miracle, virtue, strength, might, abundance, violence.

The disciples that heard Christ say these words were the two that had been walking to the village of Emmaus, the eleven disciples (otherwise called the apostles), and an undisclosed number of others. (cf. Lk.24.13, 33) The Lord is telling them that He will be leaving them, that He would not be present bodily for some time, and that He would send the Spirit of God upon them so that they might continue His work in the earth until His return. Even before His death Christ said that they would do even greater works than before. Of course this was possible only because they would be empowered by the Holy Spirit of God.

Joh 14:12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

So, the disciples of Christ were to wait in Jerusalem until after the Spirit of God came upon them, which they most certainly did. Luke says the very same in the beginning of the Acts account.

Ac 1:4 And (the Lord Jesus), being assembled together with them (these same disciples & apostles), commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.

5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

The prophet Joel prophesied of the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Joe 2:28 And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:

29 And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.

This coming of the Holy Spirit is called the *promise of the Father* (cf. Lk.24.49; Ac.1.4; 2.33) the *baptism of the Holy Spirit* (Mt.3.11; Mk.1.8; Lk.3.16; Jn.1.33; Ac.1.5; 11.16; **1Co.12.13**), the *gift of the Holy Spirit* (cf. Ac.2.38, 39; 8.20) and the *pouring out of the Holy Spirit*. (cf. Joe.2.28; Ac.2.17; 10.45)

The first instance of the promise of the Father coming was recorded on the Day of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit came upon the waiting church in the city of Jerusalem.

Ac 2:33 Therefore [the Lord Jesus] being by the right hand of God exalted, and [He, the Lord Jesus] having received of the Father [Jn.14.16, below, 'I will pray the Father'] the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth (has poured out) this, which ye now see and hear.

hath shed forth, ἐξέχεεν, 3ps. aor. ind. act. of ἐκχέω, ἐκ out, out of + χέω, to pour.

We read the same thing in John chapter 14.

Jn.14.2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

...

16 And I will pray the Father,

will pray, ἐρωτάω, tss. to beseech, to ask, to beseech, to desire, to pray.

and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

18 ¶ I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you (that is, being represented by the Holy Spirit).

...

25 ¶ These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you.

26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

...

29 And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe.

After the Spirit of the Lord came upon the gathered baptized, believing disciples in Jerusalem, then He came upon the same kind of people in the city of Samaria.

Ac 8:14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John:

15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them,

prayed, προσεύχομαι, tss. to pray.

that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (Baptized believing disciples receiving a subsequent work of the Holy Spirit of God upon them.)

16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)

17 Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

Then, the Holy Spirit came upon gathered Gentiles in the city of Caesarea that were of the house of Cornelius. Though the order of events in this text differs some with the Gentiles, it is my opinion that the result is the same as that which came upon the Jewish disciples. To explain the reason for this difference, it was necessary to convince the baptized believing Jewish disciples that God was going to work among and do for the Gentiles as he has done for the Jews.

Ac.10.44 ¶ While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

45 And they of the circumcision which believed (the church-related Jews) were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.

46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,

47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?

48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

So the Jewish disciples of Christ did for the Gentiles as they would for any Jewish believing disciple.

The First Answer of the Twelve Disciples

At this point let's consider the answer these disciples gave to Paul's first question. Paul's question again is, '*Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?*' To this they answered, '*We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.*' So we're beginning to get a clearer understanding of what the problem is with these disciples. But does their answer mean that they had no knowledge whatsoever of the Spirit of God? That they didn't know there was existing any Holy Spirit?

Now, if these were Jews such an understanding would be out of the question. The OT Scriptures reference the Holy Spirit often. Therefore the Jews being familiar with the Scriptures would have some knowledge of the Spirit of God. (*Holy Spirit* (cf. Ps.51.11; Is.63.10, 11), *Spirit*, and *Spirit of God* (cf. Ge.1.2; 6.3; 41.38) The fact

that these men had received John's Baptism we have no alternative but to conclude that they are Jews.

1. John the Baptist is the only person that administered water-baptism among his disciples. To say otherwise is speculation.
2. John the Baptist baptized only Jews or Jewish proselytes.

So, these men could not possibly be so ignorant concerning the existence of the Holy Spirit. So, let's analyze their answer a little more deeply. '*We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.*' John the Baptist's message clearly stated that the Holy Spirit *would* come. Read Mk. 1.7, 8.

Mk.1.7 And [John the Baptist] preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose.

8 I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.'?

Consider these remarks from three different Bible Commentaries.

'The words, therefore, are to be explained, not of their being unaware of the *existence* of the Holy Ghost, but of his presence and baptism on earth.' *Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament*, vol. 1, p.551

'This cannot be the meaning (that they knew absolutely nothing of the Holy Ghost, added), since the personality and office of the Holy Ghost, in connection with Christ, formed an especial subject of the Baptist's teaching. Literally, "We did not even hear whether the Holy Ghost was [given], that is, at the time of their baptism. That the word 'given' is the right supplement, seems plain from the nature of the case; and it is the same in John vii. 39, on the same subject.' *J-F-B Bible Commentary*, vol.3, p137

'[T]hey must have known that there was such a divine person as the Holy Ghost, from the writings of the Old Testament, with which they were conversant: and from the ministry of John, into whose baptism they were baptized; who saw the Spirit of God descend on Jesus, and bore witness of it; and declared, that Christ who was to come after him, would baptize with the Holy Ghost ... they knew that there were prophecies in the Old Testament, concerning the effusion of the Spirit in the last days, in the days of the Messiah; but they had not heard that these had had their accomplishment; they had heard nothing of the day of Pentecost, and of the pouring out of the Spirit upon the apostles then, nor of any instance of this kind since; they did not know that the Holy Ghost was yet, #Joh 7:39 **they knew he was promised, but not that he was given**; the

Ethiopic version, to avoid the difficulty of the text, renders it, "we have only heard that there was an Holy Ghost".' *Exposition of the Old & New Testaments*, vol.8, p.323 (bolding added)

Now, given the fact that John the Baptist was martyred before the Holy Spirit had been given, he never knew that the promise of the Holy Spirit has been fulfilled. Also, any of his disciples that had not joined themselves to Christ *could* have lacked this knowledge.

Turn to Jo.7.39. Both commentaries referred to this text because it presents the same idea as our text in Acts 19.2, that they didn't know the Holy Spirit was ... [given] yet.

Joh 7:39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet [given]; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

(This last clause in the Greek is,
οὐπω γάρ ἦν Πνεῦμα Ἅγιον,
lit. *for not yet was [given] the Holy Spirit.*

These things considered, the full meaning of their answer is that they didn't know the Holy Spirit had been given *so that they might receive Him*. With this in mind doesn't the text of Lk.11.13 become so much clearer.

Lu 11:13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

After the Spirit of the Lord came upon the church at Jerusalem, a terrible persecution broke out against the disciples, and they fled for refuge to other cities. Philip was one of those that fled. Here is a man that used to be a deacon in the Jerusalem church, appointed to help care for the widows. He fled to the city of Samaria. Here he began to preach Christ and many believed and they were baptized, we assume by this same Philip. Word that this city had received the word of God concerning Christ got back to the apostles. Evidently they were unaware of what Philip was doing. So they sent Peter and John down to see this for themselves. And this is what we read:

Ac 8:15 *Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:*

16 *(For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)*

The Second Answer of the Twelve Disciples

Turn back to Acts 19.3 and read Paul's next question: '*Unto what then were ye baptized?*'

The full sense of Paul's question is, 'What was the purpose for being baptized if not to anticipate the coming and power of the Holy Spirit upon you?' Their answer: '[We were baptized] "*Unto John's baptism.*" They assert that they had received John's baptism. We can derive from that that they had knowledge of the Holy Spirit and the promise of His coming. Everything is correct to that point except that they didn't know the Holy Spirit had been given. At this point let's turn our attention back to Apollos. Turn to Ac.18.24-26.

Acts 18.24 ¶ And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.

*25 This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, **knowing only the baptism of John.***

26 And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.

more perfectly, ἀκριβέστερον, a neut. compar. adverbially, and always tss. more perfectly (Ac.18.26; 23.15, 20; 24.22); i.e., better, more ; in other words 'the way of God' was expounded to him better than he knew before.

At the very beginning I stated that the things concerning Apollos and these twelve Ephesian disciples are related. Apollos knew only the baptism of John the Baptist, and these disciples were baptized unto John's baptism. (cf. 18.25; 19.3) And here is that relationship. Apollos' message lacked the knowledge that the Holy Spirit of God had come. His message could have been every bit as identical, as true to John the Baptist's in every other respect. The twelve disciples lacked the power of the Holy Spirit upon them as a corporate entity. They were a group of baptized

believers but not a church. They could have functioned in every other way as a true NT church by meeting, teaching, worshipping, praying, working together to accomplish as much of a work as any disciple of John the Baptist might, but yet never be a NT church. The fact is what Aquila and Priscilla found lacking in Apollos' preaching, Paul found lacking in the answers that these twelve disciples gave to him. For reasons I cannot explain, Apollos and these twelve disciples had never heard of Pentecost. It is beyond question that they had never come into contact with any church or any church-related disciple of Jesus Christ until now, for had they been this problem would have been resolved then. After all, what church can there be that doesn't know of and possess the power of the Holy Spirit of God? (cf. Eph.2.22) But that's the point here isn't it? This is the first time that these men have come into contact with church-related brethren and at this meeting they receive the correction needed to their doctrine and to their organization. I doubt that these men were the only ones like them. Is this one of John's disciples which the disciples of Christ complained about to the Lord Jesus?

Mk.9.38 And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name (by virtue of Christ's presence then), and he followeth not us: and we forbid him, because he followeth not us.

39 But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me.

40 For he that is not against us is on our part.

Were the Twelve Rebaptized?

Now, one last question to consider: were these twelve brethren rebaptized? First of all, there is nothing suggesting to us that Apollos was re-baptized. Given the same discrepancy in them both it is reasonable to say that if one should be re-baptized, so should the other be. Apollos was received by both the Ephesian church and Corinthian brethren without any mention of a re-baptism. (cf. Ac.18.27; 1Co.3.4) A. T. Robertson wrote: 'Apollos was not rebaptized.' *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, vol. 3, p.312 To consider whether chapter 19 of Acts records a rebaptism or not we need to re-read the text.

Ac 19.4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

5 *When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.*
6 *And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.*
7 *And all the men were about twelve.*

There are three points to consider that question whether these twelve Ephesian disciples were re-baptized.

1. First, the insertion of verse division might contribute to the appearance of a rebaptism.

Dividing texts into verse break was begun about the middle of 16th century, according to the *Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol.3, p.442 . A French-Italian diglot (bilingual) NT appeared with verses numbered and divided the same year. (*ibid.*, p.444)

We're familiar with reading in verse 4 Paul's reference to John the Baptist's message, "*That they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.*" Then we are inclined to return to the continuation of Luke's narrative of the Acts account, partly because of the verse division, '*When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.*' But instead, what if Paul's reference to John the Baptist's message included the whole statement of verse 5? Then Luke's narrative would have begun at verse 6, '*And when Paul heard this ...*'

Ac 19:4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that "they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

5 (ακουσαντες δε, Ac.2.37, And) When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."

This presents the whole idea of John the Baptist's ministry. IF THIS IS SO the Ephesian disciples are not the ones being baptized at all, but those which responded to John's message.

2. Second, the grammar of these two verses will not support a rebaptism.

*Ac 19:4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the **people**, that **“they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.”***

*5 (ακουσαντες δε, Ac.2.37, And) **When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.”***

The antecedent to the 3ppl. pronouns ‘they’ in verses 4 & 5 refers to ‘the people.’ John Gill wrote:

*[T]hey were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus; not the disciples that Paul found at Ephesus, but the hearers of John; for these are the words of the Apostle Paul, giving an account of John’s baptism, and of the success of his ministry, shewing, that his baptism was administered in the name of the Lord Jesus; and not the words of Luke the Evangelist, recording what followed upon his account of John’s baptism; **for then he would have made mention of the apostle’s name, as he does in the next verse; and have said, when they heard this account, they were baptized by Paul in the name of the Lord Jesus ...*** *Exposition of the Old & New Testaments, John Gill, vol.3, p.324 (bolding added)*

3. Third, John’s baptism and Christ’s baptism are the same. If these had received John the Baptist’s baptism there is no reason to administer to them another baptism.

Lu 7:29 And all the people that heard him (the Lord Jesus), and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John.

The disciples of Jesus Christ administered the baptism of John. (cf. Jn.4.1)

‘God never authorized any other baptism than John’s. It is the only baptism in the world that is from heaven. All that Jesus and the disciples baptized were with John’s baptism. It is all he and the apostles had, or have. If that is not valid, then we have no baptized Lord Jesus Christ. ... John’s baptism is the only baptism for all time. Hence when Christ gave the commission he did not put baptism in the imperative, as though he were commanding a new kind, but in the participial form—“baptizing them”—and that meant a continuance of the baptism he and they had received from John the Baptist. There was no change made.’ *The Twelve W’s of Baptism, J. B. Moody, pp.14, 15*

There is good evidence supporting the idea that the twelve Ephesian brethren were NOT re-baptized..

The Constitution of NT Churches

Now let's not overlook what became of these twelve disciples.

Ac.19.6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

These disciples had faith in Christ. They had John's baptism. But they were unaware that the Holy Spirit had been poured upon his gathered people. To remedy this we read that *when* Paul laid his hands upon them the Holy Spirit came on them. As a proof that the Holy Spirit had come upon them was that they spake with tongues and prophesied; that is these disciples began to speak in languages of other nations, languages with which they formerly were unfamiliar, and by use of these languages they proclaimed the truths of God's word.

This account in Acts 19.1-7 is the last instance where there is a public manifestation of the Holy Spirit coming upon any of the churches of Jesus Christ. This first public manifestation of the Holy Spirit coming upon the gathered church in Jerusalem was on the day of Pentecost. (Ac.1.15; 2.1-4) In this instance the Jerusalem church was waiting in Jerusalem because they were to receive a subsequent empowering of the Holy Spirit in view of the fact that the Lord Jesus had ascended into glory. These disciples waited as the Lord Jesus had commanded them to do until they received *the promise of the Father*. Proof of the Holy Spirit's presence with them was that they preached the gospel of Jesus Christ in the tongues of the many nations represented there at the temple that day. (cf. Lk.24.49; Ac.1.4)

The second public manifestation of the Holy Spirit's coming was upon the gathered baptized disciples in the city of Samaria. The apostles in Jerusalem had heard that the city of Samaria had received the word of God. For this reason they sent Peter and John to the city, who when they came laid their hands on them and prayed they might receive the Holy Spirit. And there were no '*sign-gifts*' accompanying this, like the Jerusalem church these baptized disciples became an

habitation of the Holy Spirit. A church was then formed in this city. (Ac.8.5, 6, 14-17)

The third public manifestation of the Holy Spirit's coming was upon the Gentile believing disciples of Caesarea (disciples are first *made*, then baptized [cf. Jn.4.1]). Here, while the apostle Peter was preaching Christ to them the Holy Spirit *fell on all them that heard the word*. Proof of God's working among the Gentiles just as he had worked among the Jews and half-breeds (Samaritans) was the accompanying '*sign-gifts*.' They spoke with tongues and magnified God. Peter then commanded that they be baptized, and afterward remained with them for *certain days*. (cf. Ac.10.44-48)

The last public manifestation of the Holy Spirit's coming was here upon these twelve disciples that Paul encountered when he returned to Ephesus. After his questions and their answers he then laid his hands on them and they received the promise of the Father. Once again, this was authenticated by their preaching the word of God in other languages. (cf. Ac.19.6)

All four of these accounts are of an assembly of baptized disciples being empowered, vitalized, and constituted by the Spirit of God into NT churches. Someone has said that Pentecost only happened once. Well, it certainly began there, but it didn't end there because we have three others examples of this in the NT. This account in Acts 19 is simply the last *public* manifestation of it. I would suggest that this occurs at every instance when baptized disciples form themselves into a NT church.

The One Question Paul never Asked

Now, did you notice that there is one question that Paul did not ask these disciples? The question he did not ask is, 'Who baptized you?' Now, here's the million-dollar question. In all of the NT the one question that will be the most difficult to answer is, who actually administered those baptisms. Search the Scriptures through and through and we find that it is a rare thing indeed for the Scriptures to tell who administered baptism. John the Baptist baptized. (cf. Jn.1.26, 31) Philip baptized the Ethiopian eunuch. (cf. Ac.8.38) Paul baptized the Crispus, Gaius, and household of Stephanus. (cf. 1Co.1.14, 16) So, not only are we unaware of the administrators of baptism, but there was no church presence or

any votes to approve or disapprove of them. But Paul did ask a question that we should ask.

Paul asked ‘Why were you baptized?’ Or, ‘What was the purpose for your baptism?’ The point is, like the apostle Paul perhaps we need to focus our attention on the reason for baptism. Getting to the wrong reason settles every other question about baptism. For example, if the reason for being baptized was to be regenerated, to save the soul (baptismal regeneration) it was not a baptism at all. This consideration alone throws out all Catholic, Protestant and every other heretical group’s pseudo-baptisms. Also, we know that water baptism is only by immersion. It is not immersion and pouring, sprinkling, christening, or washing. No, it is immersion. A religious group or church that entertains these as baptism has no baptism at all. Anything other than immersion because of repentance and faith in Christ is not baptism. Administering immersion to someone that had received any of these pseudo-baptisms is not a *rebaptism*.

A Summary of the Things We Have Learned

So, what have we learned? Whether it was Apollos or the Ephesian disciples, these baptized believing disciples might have been eloquent, mighty in the Scriptures, fervent in spirit, banded together preaching Jesus Christ yet still lack one vital ingredient: the empowering presence of the Spirit of God. Not only was Apollos doctrine corrected, but he also learned that ‘*Unto him [God] be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.*’ (Eph 3:21) Immediately after Apollos had been corrected he was received by and recommended to *brethren* of the churches. (cf. Ac.18.27; 1Co.3.5; 16.12) The Ephesian brethren were also corrected in their doctrine and immediately after received the Spirit’s presence with them. For these, and any like them, to have continued without the knowledge that the Father has sent the Holy Spirit to be with his baptized believing, church-related disciples was to continue in error and without power. But knowing this they were ready to receive the promise of the Heavenly Father. They were prepared to be endued with power from on high, (cf. Lk.24.49); to become an habitation of the Spirit of God, (cf. Eph.2.22); to be baptized into one body and made to drink into one Spirit, (cf. 1Co.12.13). This is what a church is. The Spirit of God coming upon them would form them into a living, covenanted body of Jesus Christ.

Twenty-five years since John the Baptist began his ministry there were still some of his disciples without this crucial knowledge. They had faith in Christ. They were baptized in water but unaware that the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the promise of the Father had been fulfilled. Their ignorance of this truth barred them from becoming what they should have been: a NT church. It cannot be over-emphasized how important it is for sinners to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God come in human flesh to save them from sin; that God commands men everywhere to repent and be water-baptized; and, that after this they should come into the fellowship of one of the Lord's NT churches where the Holy Spirit of God empowers them to do the great work of Christ in the earth until His second coming. Here the Spirit of God ministers specially to comfort, to guide, to teach, and to remind them of the things of Christ's word. By His coming the saints are specially equipped with gifts for service. But this is so ONLY for them who are either formed into or come into a NT church of Jesus Christ.

Closing Remarks

In closing if baptized, believing disciples desire to organize themselves into a church of the Lord Jesus Christ they may do so at any time. All they need to do is to agree together to carry out the commandments of Jesus Christ and ask the Lord to bless them with the Spirit's presence, and He'll grant their request. (cf. Lk.11.13) This means of self-constitution best accounts for so many of the first churches that were organized after Pentecost. Such churches as those referred to in Damascus, Syria (cf. Ac. 9.25), in Judaea, in Galilee, and in Samaria (not just the city of Samaria) (cf. Ac.9.31); in the city of Antioch, Syria. (cf. Ac.11.26) And there are still other churches in Syria and Cilicia that Paul and Silas went to confirm in the doctrine of Christ. (cf. Ac.15.41) Now there is the possibility of a plurality of churches in the city of Ephesus. There are the disciples at Ephesus (Ac.18.27), the twelve others Paul found, and the house church of Aquila and Priscilla. Plus there are a number of churches in the city of Rome. (cf. Ro.16.2, 15) Who preached Christ in all of these places? Who baptized the believing? There are so many questions and the answer we always come back to is: Jesus Christ commanded His baptized disciples to go, and they went. (Mt.28.18-20) Craig A. Thurman

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