

# Acts Chapter 18b

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[ 0 : 00 ] We're going to look at an interesting incident that happened in ancient Ephesus. This is a place that the Apostle Paul visited, and he spent more time actually in Ephesus than he did in any other city that he visited.

He was in the city of Corinth for about a year and a half, but in Ephesus he was there for two years. And there's some rather fascinating things that occurred there, and if anybody, as I mentioned before, ever has opportunity to visit the ancient ruins of Ephesus, it would be a site that you would never forget.

This was a remarkable city located right on the coast of modern-day Turkey, and it was a hustling, bustling community 2,000 years ago. Today it's all in ruins, but even the ruins are magnificent, and they give you some feel for how large this city was and how many people were living there.

So, on our Scripture sheet here in Acts chapter 18, actually, well, we've finished 18 enough, so let's just get into 19.

And we will read, beginning with verse 9, and let me remind you that the bold dark print that you're looking at is the King James Version, and then other translations follow below that as they are indicated.

[ 1 : 30 ] We're going to start with chapter 19. Yeah, 561, down in the right-hand corner. Acts chapter 19. It came to pass that while Apollos was at Corinth, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul, having passed through the upper coasts, came to Ephesus.

And finding certain disciples, he said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since you believed? Now, King James always renders this Holy Ghost.

Better translation is Holy Spirit. Ghost does not communicate the meaning. We tend to think of a ghost as somebody who wears a sheet, like Casper, you know, who just kind of floats around in a white sheet.

Nobody knows where the ghosts buy these sheets. But it's a misnomer. It is not ghost at all. It is spirit.

But spirit is non-tangible. It's not physical. Spirit doesn't even wear a sheet. Spirit cannot be seen at all.

[ 2 : 44 ] And that's what we're talking about. This is pneuma hagian, spirit the Holy One. And ghost is not a good rendering, although the King James renders it that way in just about every place.

But it should be spirit. Spirit. So he said, Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be a Holy Spirit.

We've got a real difficult translation problem here, and we need to spend a little bit of time on this, because misunderstanding it gives way to a number of things, one of which is there is a teaching. You may or may not have encountered it. It is referred to as the second blessing teaching. And the concept is that when you receive Christ by faith, you receive salvation, forgiveness, etc.

That's the first blessing. That's the blessing of salvation. But some teach that yet there is a second blessing, and that is receiving the Holy Spirit.

[ 3 : 57 ] So, even though you are a believer and regenerated, even though you have experienced God's forgiveness, if you have not had the second blessing, you have not received the Holy Spirit.

And that means you have to pray to receive the Holy Spirit. They call it tarrying. You have to pray, agonize. Sometimes it takes hours.

And when the Spirit of God comes in and is released in you, then as a result of that, you may well experience very dramatic things, like speaking in tongues, and performing miracles, and having a word of wisdom, etc.

This is common teaching today, and it is found primarily in charismatic circles. Now, even though I differ with these brethren regarding their interpretation and understanding of that, there is no doubt that they are fellow believers in Christ, and they're going to be in heaven just like those who don't believe that.

And as I've often said, that we all have flaws in our theology, in our doctrine. None of us have absolutely pure, 100% truthful doctrine.

[ 5 : 19 ] If you ever run into anybody who insists he does, avoid him like the plague. We all have flaws in our understanding. We do not grasp all of the biblical truth in all of its accuracy that we would like, because we are imperfect beings.

So we do not have a perfect understanding. And as I've often said, when we get to heaven, we're all going to get straightened out. And some of us need a lot more straightening out than others.

But nobody is spot on in everything they believe. Someone asked me one time, you actually believe that you teach some things that aren't true? I said, well, I know I do.

Well, why do you teach them then? Well, I don't know what they are. I'm looking for them. I'm trying to find things that I teach that are not true, so that I can change them, and bring them in line with what is true.

And fellas, this has all to do with spiritual growth and maturity. We ought to be examining ourselves, and our doctrine all the time, because none of us really has it all together.

[ 6 : 29 ] And these dear folk who interpret passages of Scripture like this, the verse certainly seems to say that there is salvation, because the text reads, have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed?

And it sounds very definitely like you believe, and then at some point after, you receive the Holy Spirit. But our position is, receiving the Holy Spirit is synonymous with, or is in concert with, believing.

It is at the point of salvation. When you exercise faith in Jesus Christ, and receive Him as your personal Savior, the Spirit of God enters you then.

And one of the things that He does is, He regenerates you. He makes you new on the inside. This is what some refer to as being born again.

It's an inward thing, where only God can reach. We don't know how He does this. But we do know that it is a result of our believing in the Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 7 : 48 ] We receive the Holy Spirit at that point. And part of what He does, first thing He does, is He makes us a new creation in Christ. That is also referred to as being baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ.

So we become in union with Christ at that point of salvation. So when you receive Christ as your Savior, you get the whole package.

Nothing is omitted. And the first blessing, which is salvation, is so adequate that there is no need for a second blessing. Receiving the Holy Spirit is part of our salvation.

It goes with that. But it certainly doesn't look like that here. There's another passage. If you've got your Bible, I think it's Ephesians 2. And it refers to the same kind of concept.

And it too is somewhat misleading, the way it is read. No, it's Ephesians 1. Ephesians 1.

[ 8 : 59 ] And verse 11. Paul says, In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will, that we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ.

And then verse 13. In whom you also trusted after that you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom also after that you believed you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.

So here is another passage that makes it look like you believe at point one. And then at some point after believing, you are later sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise.

That too is a translation difficulty, even as the one in Acts 19. And you've got some alternate readings. Well, actually you don't have that sheet before you, but I've got some alternate readings here that's just the same as your sheet, only from a different text.

And here he is saying, the American Standard Version says, in whom, having also believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.

[ 10 : 24 ] And another says, you believed in Him and were sealed as His by receiving the Holy Spirit which He promised. So in this passage here in Ephesians, as well as a corrected text in the

one that you have before you, it makes it very clear that receiving the Holy Spirit is identical with receiving salvation.

In fact, Romans 8 and 9 says, indeed, if the Spirit of Christ dwell in you. Now, if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

You cannot be a believer in Jesus Christ and not possess the Holy Spirit. This is what Paul meant when he chided the Corinthians for their raunchy behavior.

And he said, what? Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which you have received of God? And you are not your own. You are bought with a price.

Therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. So it's made crystal clear in other passages that at the point of salvation you receive the Holy Spirit.

[11:35] He is the one, when he comes in, he regenerates. He makes you a new person in Christ. And when he said, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation.

Old things have passed away. Behold, all things have become new. Who did that? You didn't do that. The Spirit of God did that. And we don't know how he does that, but he rearranges the furniture.

Some things he just throws out. One, the Holy Spirit brings with him a spiritual dynamic that causes you to develop a different interest level so that things you used to not care about at all, you now care about very deeply.

He causes a different attitude. He causes a different value system to come into play. All of these things are wrought in you by the Spirit of God when He comes in.

He makes you a new person on the inside. And that happens at the point of salvation when God provides for you 33 different things that we know of.

[12:52] and there may very well be more. 33 blessings, 33 provisions that God provides for you at the point of salvation and most believers don't even realize it or understand it.

But the Scriptures make it quite clear that they do. So, this is not a good translation here. Some others have rendered it was the Holy Spirit given to you?

Did you receive the Spirit since you believed when you first believed on your becoming believers at your conversion? And here's the problem. Look, I'll be as succinct as I can be, but I've got to go back to this.

When Christ was here and when John the Baptist introduced Christ, this is a really important point, guys, regarding the Spirit of God. John said, I indeed baptize you with water.

This was before Jesus ever came on the scene. John the Baptist was born six months earlier than Jesus and he came on the scene in Israel baptizing and people came out to hear him and it was an electric thing.

[14:02] And John told his audience, John said, I indeed baptize you with water, but there cometh one after me who is mightier than I and he, and of course he's speaking of Christ, the Messiah, he says, he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Makes a clear distinction between John's baptism with water and what Christ would do when he came. So, the Spirit of God had not yet been given and the Spirit of God would not be given in this dramatic way that John is talking about until the day of Pentecost.

That will be Acts chapter 2. And we've spent sufficient time there in the past. I think you've got a handle on that. So, here is a baptism that is not with water and when these people believed, at least 3,000 of them believed on the day of Pentecost, the Spirit of God descended on them and this was the baptism that John the Baptist was talking about.

This was Christ baptizing these people with the Holy Spirit. and the evidence of that was that immediately these people were able to communicate the gospel of Christ in languages they had not learned and did not know.

Now, the Bible calls this speaking in tongues and that's what a lot of people call it today, speaking in tongues. A more correct term for that is speaking in unknown languages.

[15:55] These tongues. Tongue in the Bible is often just another word for a language. We talk about people speaking from every tongue and nation.

What are we talking about? We're talking about all these diverse languages that people speak.

French and English and Dutch and German and it goes on and on. These are tongues. And the reason they're called tongues is because you use your tongue when you talk and it just came to be a natural kind of thing.

But it actually means languages. This was an evidence or proof positive that the Spirit of God had come because He brought this miraculous energy and power with Him that none of these people had.

And yet everyone was able to hear the message in their own language wherein they were born. It was clearly a miracle. No doubt about it. And this was promised after Christ came and after the death, burial, and resurrection and Jesus told them at His ascension you are to tarry in Jerusalem until you are endued with power not many days hence.

And then He ascended and went to heaven. they didn't know how many days that would be. But they were staying there in Jerusalem like they were told. And ten days later when they were in the temple concourse there was a voice, there was a noise of a rushing mighty wind.

[ 17 : 34 ] And this was in connection with the feast of Pentecost. And people were saying, what's that? What is that? What is it? And this noise was just deafening. And what it was, was the arrival of the Spirit of God resting upon those people and they began speaking in these languages they had not learned.

Now, why that? Why that miracle? Well, if you read there in Acts 2, you will see that these Jews who were gathered there for the Jewish feast of Pentecost were from all over the Mediterranean world.

They were there on a pilgrimage. And some of them had saved up a lot of money for a lot of years to be able to make that trip. And for some of them it was hundreds of miles over water, over land, and many of them could only do this once in a lifetime or twice in a lifetime.

And they were required by the Mosaic Law to keep the feast and to present themselves before the Lord. And that involved making a sacrifice and buying an animal and having a priest sacrifice there in the temple area.

This was all in connection with the day of Pentecost. The day of Pentecost was not made Pentecost because people spoke in tongues. The day of Pentecost would have been the day of Pentecost if nothing special had ever happened because it was on the Jewish calendar.

[ 18 : 57 ] And it was the same time every year. Pentecost, whether it was tabernacles or whatever the day of atonement or whatever was on the Jewish calendar. So, the need was very practical for all of these people who had gathered there from all over the world to be able to hear this message of Jesus of Nazareth was crucified and the third day rose from the dead.

And that's what Peter preached in that. But what good would it have been for him to have preached that message if three-fourths of the audience couldn't even understand what he was saying? That was the purpose of the tongue, of the languages.

And it enabled everybody to get the message. And then, by the way, when all these people went back home, where they had come from on that pilgrimage, what do you think they took with them? All of that information, all of that message, what happened on that feast of Pentecost, it was a miraculous thing. And healings were performed. All of this, all of this served to authenticate the reality of what had happened.

It was done, these miracles, the tongue speaking, language speaking, and the performing of the physical miracles, all of that was done to demonstrate this was God's doing, not man's.

[ 20 : 25 ] Man could not do this. And everybody knew that. This was a supernatural visitation. Absolutely undeniable. And they were all amazed. They were just dumbfounded.

And there were 3,000 who believed, and as I've often said, I think they were a minority because the crowd was probably a whole lot larger than 3,000. And 3,000 believed. So, here's what happened. Before the death, burial, and resurrection, and ascension of Christ, the Spirit of God was not available this way. afterwards, the Spirit of God coming on the day of Pentecost was simply the fulfillment of a promise that Christ gave.

You will be endued with power not many days hence, when He, the Spirit of God, comes upon you. And that's exactly what happened. And everybody who was there and believed on the Lord Jesus Christ received the Spirit of God at that time.

So, the question that is put to these is, have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed? And they said, we have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Spirit.

[ 21 : 38 ] Now, it doesn't mean that, that too is not a good translation, because these people knew the Spirit of God existed. They had the whole Old Testament and the Spirit of God is found all throughout the Old Testament.

In fact, He's found in the very second verse of the first chapter of Genesis, where the Spirit of God brooded upon the face of the water. It doesn't mean that these people had never heard that there was a Holy Spirit.

What they are saying is, they never heard or knew that the Holy Spirit was available in that way, or that He had come in that way. And He said unto them, well then, unto what then were you baptized?

What then was the purpose of your baptism? And they said, unto John's baptism. baptism. Now right here, we've got a real difference. What's going on? What then, unto what were you baptized? And they said, unto John's baptism. Now what they mean is, they were baptized with John's baptism before the Spirit of God came on the day of Pentecost.

[ 22 : 49 ] their spiritual rebirth took place under John's baptism when John was baptizing huge numbers of people who came to Him.

And why was he baptized? He was baptizing them unto repentance for the remission of sins. And those who believed John's message and were identified with him were people who were regenerated if they possessed a personal internal faith, they were people who were regenerated, but they had not received the Spirit of God.

Because the Spirit of God did not come until the day of Pentecost. This, John's baptism, was before Pentecost. John promised that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire, but that had not taken place.

And we all know that John was put to death. John was executed long before Christ was crucified. But those people, those disciples of John, kept baptizing in John's name or with John's baptism. And it was simply called the baptism of John. So, what we've got here is an historical kind of disconnect because these people had not received the Spirit of God because their salvation took place under the ministry of John the Baptist before the Spirit of God came.

[ 24 : 19 ] So, they were out of the loop. They were out of the loop. And what follows is rather fascinating and it too is part of the confusion. They said, we were baptized unto John's baptism.

And by the way, remember, fellas, this is really important. I want you to see the connection. Remember earlier in chapter 18 when Apollos came on the scene and he was a man mighty in the scriptures and he began, he was preaching in the synagogue and Aquila and Priscilla were there and they heard him, they heard Apollos preach.

And I'm sure that when they were sitting there listening to his message, they were saying to each other, you know, Apollos is great with his content, but he needs to be brought up to speed.

And the scriptures say that they took Apollos aside and taught him the word of God more perfectly. What that means, the word perfect comes from the word telos and it means with more completeness. In other words, they updated Apollos. His message was great as far as it went, but it didn't go far enough.

[ 25 : 29 ] It did not include what God was doing with the Gentiles. And they took him aside and they taught him the word of God more completely.

They brought him up to speed because all he knew was John's baptism. He was one of those in this same crowd. So we read in verse 4 then, chapter 19, Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on him who should come after him.

That is, on Christ Jesus. Now, here is where the difficulty begins. Who is talking here? Paul is talking.

Paul the apostle. And he says, he reminisces a little bit, and he says, you know, John the baptizer, when he was baptizing, he baptized with the baptism of repentance, and what was John's message?

He preached to the people, and John said that they should believe on him, which would be Christ, on him which should come after him, that is, after John, that is, on Jesus Christ.

[ 26 : 49 ] And when they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Now, here is the difficulty. Let me point it out. Look at your sheet.

When they heard this, to whom does they refer? That personal pronoun, they.

In other words, who is still speaking? Pardon? I think that's exactly what it's saying.

He is saying, let me read this another way, saying unto the people that they should, now, Paul here, Paul is quoting John.

It was Paul who was speaking to these people at Ephesus, but he was quoting what John the Baptist said, when he said, saying unto the people that they, that is John's audience, to whom he was preaching, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is on Christ Jesus.

[ 28 : 08 ] When they, that is those to whom John was speaking, not those to whom Paul was speaking. Makes a huge difference here.

You've got to pick up on this. When they, that is those in John's audience, which was historical, John's dead and off the scene now, but this was the message when John was preaching. And when those who were in John's audience heard this, they, those in John's audience, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Now there is another, pardon me? What is that? Being baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, is that the Holy Spirit baptism? If He hasn't come yet, God, no, no, it isn't, it isn't, it isn't the Holy Spirit baptism.

That won't be realized until Acts 2. This predates that. But what it is doing is it is identifying those who are being baptized with John's baptism, it is identifying those people and their faith in this coming Messiah, who would of course be Christ.

[ 29 : 19 ] John and then Richard. So those people that John the Baptist preached to, they believe on Jesus Christ just like we do except He hadn't died yet.

He hadn't been crucified. Right. And what they believed, they didn't believe death, burial, and resurrection. But they did believe He is the Messiah. He will be the Messiah. He will be the one sent by God.

Now, the opposite view of this, and I must admit that the opposite view is, the majority opinion. I'm convinced that it's wrong, but it's the majority opinion.

And the majority opinion is this, that John, that in verse 5, when they heard this, that they take it, those to whom Paul was speaking, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

And the typical position is that these people had already been baptized with John's baptism. But, that wasn't Christian baptism.

[ 30 : 26 ] This is Christian baptism, and now they are being re-baptized, baptized over again. That's a typical position, and it is taken by most of our Baptist friends that Paul is here re-baptizing them because the baptism of John needed to be followed by Christian baptism.

And I think that does a great disservice to the text. Actually, what it is saying is that those who believed John's message were baptized by John and there was no need for a re-baptism.

They make a distinction between that was Jewish baptism, this was Christian baptism, but there's nothing in the text to indicate that. So, what happened then was in verse 6, Paul laid his hands upon them and the Holy Spirit came on them.

They were really brought up to speed in just about every way. And the difference is really significant. The reason that Paul laid hands on them, I think, is because he was simply exercising apostolic authority that Christ had given to them.

And what he did when he laid hands on them, what he did was he, by the auspices of God, brought the Pentecostal experience upon this number of people, this small group, in a kind of coming of the Spirit of God in miniature.

[ 31 : 58 ] And it was done through Paul's laying on of hands. This was clearly a miraculous thing. But it brought them up to the same place where they were, the 3,000 on the day of Pentecost.

And prior to that time, of course, they did not have that experience. How many were present? We aren't told. We aren't given a number. It just says that he found certain disciples in verse 1.

We aren't given a number. It could have been half a dozen. It could have been 20. We don't know. God's baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Did they have to have had God's baptism of repentance prior to that? And does that relate to any way to our baptism today?

No. No, I don't think so. And the reason I say that is because on the day of Pentecost, the 3,000 who believed and were baptized were those who formerly rejected John's message.

[ 33 : 06 ] They were not baptized of John. They did not believe that John was the messenger and that Christ was the Messiah. And as a result of Peter preaching there in Acts 2, they were convinced that they were wrong.

Jesus was the Messiah. John was legitimate. We better get with the program. And 3,000 of them believed and were baptized with John's baptism.

This was a baptism they earlier rejected. But when you repent, that means you reverse yourself. And that's exactly what they did. They said, we rejected John and his message and Jesus as the Messiah.

Boy, did we blow it. We were wrong. And 3,000 of them believed. Well, you cannot believe without changing your mind.

And that's what repentance is. because when you repent, you come from one position to another position. You kind of reverse yourself. And repentance is a really hard thing to do because it means we have to admit we've been wrong and we don't like to do that.

[ 34 : 12 ] Jeff. I'm sorry, where are you?

What verse are you? broken, Yes, yes, yes.

This they is those to whom Paul is speaking. And he lays hands on them, and they prophesy. And the reason I think that this was done, and this is important, guys.

We've got this transition period going here. And when the Spirit of God came on them, and they were able to speak in languages that they did not know, what that did was it demonstrated and proved to everybody that God was in this.

This was a God thing. And remember, when Peter went to Cornelius back in Acts chapter 10, this guy wasn't even a Jew. He was a Gentile.

[ 35 : 35 ] And when Peter preached the message to him, and he believed the Spirit of God came on them. Remember, Peter didn't even want to go there. And the Spirit of God came on Cornelius and all the rest.

And what did that prove? That proved to Peter, this was a God thing. God is in this. Remember, Peter did not want to go to Cornelius because he was a Gentile.

And then, when Peter is called on the carpet by his fellow Jews for going to Cornelius, Peter says, look, he said, I didn't want to go. God bade me go. I had to go.

And when I gave them the message, the Spirit of God came on them, and they spoke with other tongues, just like he did upon us on the day of Pentecost. And it all clicked.

And it says, then they held their peace and said, then has God also granted repentance unto the Gentiles. This was dynamite stuff. So the tongues and the miracles and the healing, all designed to authenticate that God was in this.

[ 36 : 34 ] This was a supernatural thing, not a human thing at all. So does baptism today relate at all to this? I'm sorry? Does baptism today relate at all to these baptisms, one of the repentance and the Holy Spirit, or is it totally different?

I think it is totally different. Let me just explain this, and I'll let you eat your breakfast in peace. And by the way, go right ahead and eat. Don't wait for me. My contention is, and I realize this is different from what some of you have been taught.

It's different from what I was taught, too. My contention is that the water baptism that was so emphasized under John's ministry has been displaced with spirit baptism.

Ephesians 4.5 says there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism. What baptism is that? We know that it's the baptism with the Holy Spirit, baptism by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ that regenerates you.

That's what makes you a new person in Christ. So what I am suggesting is that the water baptism has been displaced by spirit baptism. And the water baptism is under the Jewish dispensation.

[ 37 : 49 ] Spirit baptism is that which regenerates. And when you believe in Christ, the Spirit of God baptized you into the body of Christ. You were not baptized by the Lord Jesus.

You were baptized by the Spirit of God into the body of Christ. But when John preached baptism, and when the baptism on the day of Pentecost took place, it was Jesus was the baptizer, and he baptized with the Holy Spirit.

But when we believe today in this dispensation, this church age, we are baptized not by Christ. We are baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ.

And there is a difference there, and I think it's because there are two different dispensations. And I'd be happy to discuss this privately with any of you if you want to talk about it further. It is not a position that I came to easily nor quickly, but it's one that I'm convinced of.

Thank you.