

ALL THOSE IN THE PROVINCE OF ASIA HEARD WORD OF THE LORD

Acts 18 & 19

September 11

"Then he [Paul] went into the Synagogue and spoke boldly for the period of three months, disputing and persuading about the things concerning the Kingdom of God. But when various men were hardened and did not believe, but kept on speaking evil about 'The Way' in front of the multitude, he departed from them and separated the Disciples while disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. And this continued for the period of two years; so that all who dwelt in [the province of] Asia, both Jews and Greeks, heard the Word of the Lord Jesus."³⁹⁶⁶

Altogether, Paul resided in Corinth for "a year and six months, teaching the Word of God among them."³⁹⁶⁷ We have seen³⁹⁶⁸ it was during this time, that the Apostle also wrote his *First Epistles* and his *Second Epistle* to the Thessalonians.

At the end of those eighteen months, Paul departed from Corinth in about A.D. 52. He left together with two important Christian Disciples -- namely Aquila and Priscilla.³⁹⁶⁹ But they then relocated in Ephesus, while he himself went on to Jerusalem.³⁹⁷⁰

Then an Alexandrian Hebrew-Christian named Apollos went to Ephesus. He was not only very "eloquent" but also "mighty in the Scriptures" -- and already well "instructed" or 'catechized' (*kat^och^omenos*) in "**The Way** of the Lord' (*t^on Hodon tou Kuriou*)." In Ephesus, he spoke fervently in the power of the Spirit, teaching boldly in the Synagogue.³⁹⁷¹

Already proficient "in "**The Way** of the Lord'" means Apollos was adept not only in God's **Mosaic Law** alias **Derek** or **Hodos** or '**Way**' -- but familiar also with that same Decalogical Way of **Christianity**. Exodus 18:20; 20:2ff; 23:20; 32:8; Deuteronomy 5:33; 6:7; 8:2-6; 9:12-16; Psalm 1:1f; 18:30-32; 119:32-37; Acts 9:2; 18:25-26; 19:9; 19:23; 22:4; 24:14; 24:22.

So then, **before** his arrival in Ephesus, Apollos already thoroughly knew about Johannine Baptism. For, even then, he already well knew how John the Baptizer himself had preached about the then-still-future official work of the Messiah during His First Advent.³⁹⁷² Yet Apollos **not yet** knew or preached (as much as then could be known or be preached) -- about specifically **Jesus** as the promised Messiah or Christ.

So, when Paul's associates Aquila and Priscilla heard Apollos speaking about Johannine Baptism and the things of the Lord -- they took him aside and "expounded to him '**The Way** of God' [*t^on Hodon tou Theou* even] **more** perfectly [*akribesteron*]."³⁹⁷³ For John's doctrine and Johannine Baptism about Christ and God's Spirit -- had now been fulfilled in the Person of the Lord **Jesus** and the Spirit-filled Christian Church.

John's Baptism and doctrine were **fulfilled** or **terminally accomplished** -- when he baptized the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Ever since then, John's doctrine and his baptizings -- now like remnantal scaffolding priorly erected only to complete the edification of a building -- were monuments or relics now testifying that their purpose had been achieved.

Nor further such monuments were now to be erected -- and even the memory of those that still remained, would then begin to fade away. As John the Baptizer himself had predicted, he would now "decrease" -- while Christ's doctrine and His Baptism would "increase." John 1:25-33 & 3:23 to 4:2 *cf.* Matthew 28:19*f.*

For **Jesus alone** possesses the Holy Spirit **without measure** alias to an **immeasurable extent**. Indeed, God His Father had **now** given **all** things into the hand of Jesus Christ³⁹⁷⁴ -- especially after His Resurrection from the dead, at His endorsement of Triune Baptism when He gave His Ministers their Great Commission.³⁹⁷⁵

Accordingly, once Apollos had thus been "instructed **more** perfectly,"³⁹⁷⁶ he left Ephesus in the province of Asia for Achaia in Greece. Once there, "he mightily convinced the Jews -- and that, publically -- showing **from the Scriptures** that **Jesus** was Christ."³⁹⁷⁷

Before arriving in Ephesus, Apollos was already a **True Disciple** of John the Baptizer.³⁹⁷¹ **Before leaving** Ephesus, he clearly understood that specifically **Jesus** was the promised Christ.

Yet there were **others** apparently in the remote regions of the northern or upper coasts of the province of Asia Minor -- who **falsely claimed** to have received Johannine Baptism. **Falsely so claimed**, because -- unlike John himself and unlike John's **True** Disciples such as Apollos³⁹⁷¹ -- they had never even **heard** that there **is** a Holy Spirit; and may also possibly not even have known anything at all about the Christ.

Such folk were of course not Christians at all. They were still lost in their sins. So God now sent Paul to evangelize them in Northern Asia Minor.

While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul departed on his third missionary journey. Setting out again from Antioch in Syria, he went through the regions of Galatia and Phrygia -- systematically strengthening all the **Christians** there, until he finally arrived back in Ephesus where he then encountered those who falsely claimed to be Disciples of John the Baptizer.

In Ephesus, then, Paul found about twelve men whom his companion Dr. Luke calls "certain Disciples." Yet, in his own inspired book *The Acts of the Apostles*, Luke does not say **whose** "Disciples" they were.

Not only the Lord Jesus but also John the Baptizer too had **his** 'Disciples.' Indeed, there were also many "Disciples" of the "Pharisees" (Mark 2:18 *cf.* 7:1-7) -- who were totally devoid of faith in the one and only True Triune God.

Now these twelve 'Disciples' in Ephesus **falsely** claimed to have received 'John's Baptism.'

By this, those men probably did not mean they had been baptized by John himself -- but baptized rather by someone else in the **name of John**. That, of course, John himself would have regarded as quite heretical. Moreover, unlike the Trinitarian John, and unlike John's True Disciples such as Apollos -- these twelve were heterodox **Unitarians**. Indeed, and again very unlike John, even according to their own testimony they had "**not so much as [even] heard whether there be any holy ghost**"³⁹⁷⁸

So those approximately twelve men are simply called "Disciples" -- as too were the pupils even of the unsaved Pharisees. The men were apparently never True Disciples of John the Baptizer at all, but Disciples only of some of the Trinitarian John's offbeat Unitarian Imitators.

All of John's Disciples should have left him and followed Jesus, after John baptized the Saviour. Nearly all of them did (Jn. 1:28-31,35-45 & 3:26 to 4:3). A few of them, however, did not (*cf.* Mt. 11:2-7 & 17:10-13).

There were, then, apparently some such offbeat people. Among these were followers of those Johannine Disciples who 'missed the boat'; and further too, there were also followers of Unitarians who misunderstood even the offbeat followers of John the Baptizer. Such offbeats did not follow or even know about Jesus or the Holy Spirit. And it was some of them, or some of **their followers**, whom Paul now met in Ephesus.

Therefore Paul then explained to them that John **truly** baptized and **truly** preached, so that the people should believe in Him Who would come after him. For those who **believingly** heard John's sermons, would put their trust in Jesus Christ, Who would then Himself baptize them with the Holy Spirit (of Whom those twelve men Paul met in Ephesus had right till then never even **heard**).

But Paul then taught them what John had really taught -- namely that the Father would send Christ the Messiah in the power of His Holy Spirit. Thereupon those twelve non-trinitarian **Pseudo-Johannites**³⁹⁷⁸ immediately believed the Gospel. They then became Trinitarians. And then, for their first time ever, they received Triune Baptism -- apparently from Paul, and by authority of "the Name of the Lord Jesus."³⁹⁷⁹

Rev. Professor Dr. John Calvin explains in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (IV:15:7f & IV:15:18) that some **erring "writers...say** that the one Baptism [of John the Baptizer] was **only preparative** to the other [Baptism in the Name of the Triune God]...; because they read that those who had received the 'Baptism of John' were again 'baptized' by Paul (Acts 19:3-5 and Matthew 3:11). How greatly they are mistaken in this!"

Indeed, Calvin adds that the 'rebaptizing' **Anabaptists** of his own day and age "seem to think the weapon which they brandish irresistible -- when they allege that Paul rebaptized those who had been baptized 'with the Baptism of John.' Acts 19:3-5." Against that erroneous view, however, Calvin upholds his own correct conviction and "confession [that] **the Baptism of John was the same as ours.**"

Calvin adds about those twelve ex-heretics who until then had been ignorant Unitarians: "I

deny that they were re-baptized" in Acts 19. He then goes on, and rightly concludes: "So numerous being the acts of ignorance which by the mercy of God are daily corrected in us -- what **rivers** would suffice for so many **repeated** Baptisms!"

Also in Calvin's 1544 *Treatise Against Anabaptists* -- he refutes the Anabaptists' 1537 *Schleitheim Confession*. Explains Calvin: "These poor fanatics cite the usage and practice of the Apostles." Acts 19:2f. Yet "of **children** who **belong** to the **Church** before they depart their mother's womb...their fathers and forefathers received the **promise** upon which their [infant] Baptism is founded....

"The Anabaptists...think they have a passage that is precisely in their favour in Acts 19:2f -- where it is written that Saint Paul, having discovered certain 'Disciples' who had not yet received the Holy Spirit, **rebaptized** them" (*sic*). That, of course, is not so.

However, added Calvin, if it were to be so: "We would **constantly** require a **lake** or river in readiness -- **if** it were a matter of receiving Baptism anew, every time our Lord should purge us of error!" But, of course, that is not the case.

Calvin, the Genius of Geneva, comments on Acts 19:4f "that **the Baptism of John** was a sign of repentance.... There is **no difference between it and our own Baptism** [as **Romanism** misalleges].... Therefore **we do not read that Christ baptized afresh those who came over to Him from John** [John 3:22f & 4:1f].... Fanatical men of our day, relying on this 'evidence' [*cf.* Acts 19:3-5], have tried to introduce Anabaptism.... Yet I do **deny that the Baptism of water was repeated**" by Paul at Ephesus.

Paul, then, gave **their first Christian Baptism ever** -- to the twelve ex-heretics in Ephesus. Then, "when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came upon them. And they started to speak in languages, and started to prophesy."³⁹⁸⁰

Now this was the last "**out-trickling**" of the Holy Ghost after His **principal outpouring** on Pentecost Sunday, when He descended like a torrent once and for all into His Church. **Then**, all the Hebrew Apostles of the Church (still consisting exclusively of converted Semitic Jews) **spoke miraculously and intelligibly** -- in languages previously unknown to them -- to many foreign visitors then in Jerusalem for the Jews' great Feast of Pentecost.³⁹⁸¹

Subsequently, the first Semi-Semitic Samaritan Disciples probably did so too³⁹⁸² -- as also the first Hamitic Disciple perhaps did.³⁶⁴² Shortly thereafter, the first Japhethitic Gentile Disciples certainly did the same, at the time of their Baptism.³⁹⁸³

And now we encounter the reception into the Christian Church of the first truly-converted and formerly-unitarian **Pseudo-Disciples** -- in those "upper coasts."³⁹⁸⁴ Predictably and properly, they too then miraculously spoke in tongues at the time of their Christian Baptism.

All this completely fulfilled the promise of the Lord Jesus. We mean the promise that His Disciples would be filled with the Holy Ghost, and would then be His witnesses -- in Jerusalem and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the Earth³⁹⁸⁵ (in those "upper

coasts").³⁹⁸⁴

Never again would the Holy Spirit be poured out even as a supplementary "out-trickling." For the **firstlings** converted to Christ from **all** the various categories of People -- christianized Jewish Semites, Samaritan Semi-Semites, (Ethiopian) Hamites, Gentile Japhethites, and Pseudo-Disciples -- had now all thus been shown to belong to the Church Universal.

With all this now accomplished, **miraculous** tongues-speaking then ceased. As Rev. Professor Dr. Charles Hodge points out in his great commentary on the *Corinthian Epistles*, the tongues phenomena at Corinth was of a **non-miraculous** character. It amounted simply to the God-given "natural" ability of some to speak in, or to translate into, didactically-acquired spoken languages -- such as one's own mother tongue and/or other spoken languages.³⁹⁸⁶

The conversion of the Unitarian Pseudo-Disciples at Ephesus into Trinitarian Christians, was a major historical event. As a result, the Church was blessed -- very greatly. Such blessings occur to the Church also today -- whenever equally-unitarian Jews and Moslems and Jehovah's witnesses embrace the one true Triune God.

For then, Paul "went into the Synagogue and spoke boldly for the period of three months -- disputing and persuading about the things concerning the Kingdom of God. But when various men were hardened and did not believe, but kept on speaking evil about 'The Way' in front of the **multitude** -- he departed from them." Indeed, from those Judaists he then "separated" his own Christian "Disciples" -- while [nevertheless still] disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.³⁹⁸⁷

Some of those Synagogue-Jews, of course, **did** get converted to Christ. For only "various" (or 'divers' or 'certain') men of the Jewish listeners were hardened. But when after three months' disputation in their Synagogue, the unbelieving section of the Jews still rejected the Gospel and slandered True Christianity in the presence of everyone -- Paul finally separated the (Ex-Judaistic and Ex-Gentile) Christian Disciples on the one hand, from the un-believing Synagogue-Judaists on the other. Thenceforth, he went and held his own meetings, for Christians, elsewhere -- separated from the Synagogue and its services.

This was a huge step forward. Far from weakening Christianity, by finally separating it from Judaism -- this action of the Apostle much strengthened the Church.

For this clearly demonstrated the Christian Church's own identity to be quite distinct from that of the Judaistic Synagogue. From then on, the lines were drawn very clearly. All could now clearly see that Christianity and Judaism were quite distinctly two different religions.

The result was that after two years of independent existence separated from the Synagogue -- the Christian Church at Ephesus became very strong. So effective was its testimony, that "**all** who dwelt in [the province of] Asia -- both Jews and Greeks -- heard the Word of the Lord Jesus."³⁹⁸⁸

Calvin comments here about Paul that then "the whole of Asia [alias the western part of

what is now the modern Turkey] was pervaded by the odour of his preaching.... The seed was scattered far and wide....

"His labour was fruitful not only for one city, but also for distant places. And it often happens that when the truth of God is preached in one place, and has been spread far and wide -- it echoes where the voice of the Minister himself cannot be heard."

O Christian, may we too realize that all categories of men are save-**able** -- Semitic Jews and Semi-Semitic Samaritans; Hamitic and Japhethitic Gentiles; and even Unitarian Pseudo-Disciples! But may we also understand that only **those** are actually **saved** who (like the Ephesians Pseudo-Disciples after their later conversion) actually become true Christians! And this they are to do -- by confessing Jesus as their Saviour; by submitting to Triune Christian Baptism; by joining the Christian Church; and by openly setting themselves apart from all other religious bodies on the face of the Earth.

May we too believe and declare this! And may we thus testify, so that not only all they who dwell in **Asia** will hear the Word of the Lord Jesus, but also all those who dwell throughout the **World** -- both Jews and Gentiles!

So on, then, Christian soldiers! Onward, to victory!

-
3966. Acts 19:8-10. 3967. Acts 18:11. 3968. Cf. our studies for Sept. 9-12. 3969. Acts 18:1-3,18.
3970. Acts 18:19-22a. 3971. Acts 1:1; 18:24-26f & 19:1-3,13-16f cf. Jn. 1:31-33 & Lk. 3:16-22.
3972. Jn. 1:19-31 & Mt. 11:1-13. 3973. Acts 18:26 cf. Jn. 1:31-33 & 3:22 to 4:2f. 3974. Jn. 3:22-35.
3975. Mt. 28:18f. 3976. Acts 18:26. 3977. Acts 18:28.
3978. Acts 19:1-3f. Cf. too n. 3973. For an exhaustive discussion of this matter, see F.N. Lee's *Rebaptism is Sin!* (3 Kenya St., Wavell Heights, Q. 4012, Australia, 1998, pp. 116).
3979. Acts 19:3-5 cf. Mt. 28:19 & 3:11-17. 3980. Acts 19:6. 3981. Acts 2:1-4f. 3982. Acts 8:12-19.
3983. Acts chs. 10 & 11. 3984. Acts 19:1. 3985. Acts 1:5-8.
3986. I Cor. 14:6-8,10f,13,21 cf. Isa. 28:11f & Dt. 28:49 and cf. C. Hodge's *Commentary of First Corinthians* (on I Cor. ch. 14) with F.N. Lee's *Speaking in Tongues and Neo-Pentecostalism*, in *Die Kerkbode*, Cape Town, 1970f (and many articles by him written later in Australia).
3987. Acts 19:8f. 3988. Acts 19:10.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX