

Bi134 Acts

Lesson Bi134-35 The Ephesian Outpouring

Change is hard for people. When someone travels to a different country, their eating and sleeping habits are disrupted. Even people who do not travel encounter new tools for doing old tasks, different foods to eat, or new technology to talk to their neighbors. In this lesson, some people in Ephesus had a difficult time accepting change.

Leaving Corinth, Paul and Silas set out for Antioch, Syria, where they had begun their long journey. On the way, they stopped at Ephesus and left Priscilla and Aquila there to strengthen the new believers. After spending some time in Antioch, Paul set out on his third missionary journey.

He first revisited the churches he had planted in Galatia and Phrygia, then ventured westward across Asia Minor. He finally arrived at Ephesus, the provincial capital of Asia. Ephesus was a great city of about 750,000 inhabitants. It contained the famed temple of the goddess Artemis, one of the ‘Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.’

Soon after arriving in Ephesus, Paul encountered 12 disciples. These men were likely members of the city’s emerging church. He abruptly asked them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?”

They answered, “We have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.”

“Then what baptism did you receive?” Paul responded.

They answered, “The baptism of John the Baptist.”

Paul then explained, “John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance. It also pointed to faith in Jesus who was to come.” At that, Paul baptized the 12 disciples in the name of the Lord Jesus. He then laid his hands on them, and the Holy Spirit came upon them, just as he had come upon the 120 at Pentecost and on the Gentiles in Caesarea. They began to speak in tongues and prophesy (Acts 19:1-7).

Paul then went to work. He took these 12 newly Spirit-baptized disciples and led them into the synagogue. There, he began to declare the kingdom of God. He continued this for three months until some members of the synagogue began to complain. Paul then took the disciples and moved to the lecture hall of Tyrannus where, for the next two years, he taught both Jews and Greeks.

All the while, the Spirit of the Lord worked powerfully through Paul. God used him to heal diseased people and to deliver those who were bound by evil spirits. He became so famous that even the demons knew his name, and many people turned to the Lord. Some who became Christians denounced their former lives by publicly burning the fetishes they had used to practice sorcery. As a result, the word of the Lord continued to spread powerfully throughout the region.

Of course, the devil wasn't happy with this development, so he began to fight back. He used a silversmith named Demetrius to incite a great riot in the city. This man was angry because Paul was hurting his business. He sold little silver shrines to the people, which they used in the worship of Artemis. Demetrius went into the public square and began to cry out, "These men are insulting our great goddess. They are causing many people to turn away from her by saying that manmade gods are no gods at all. We must put a stop this madness!" This so inflamed the people that they began to chant over and over, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" This went on for two hours. Finally, the city clerk was able to quiet them down. After scolding them, he sent them to their homes (Acts 19:23-41).

When Paul arrived in Ephesus, he found 12 disciples. Some have taught that these men were not true disciples of Jesus; they were merely followers of John the Baptist. However, this idea is not correct. These men were true Christians and were likely members of the city's emerging church. We know this by studying Luke's Gospel and Acts. Every time Luke uses the word 'disciple' without any qualifying adjective, he is talking about disciples of Christ.

Although these 12 men had been born again, they had not yet been baptized in the Holy Spirit. Paul knew that if they were to be effective witnesses for Christ, they would need the Spirit's power. The same is true for us today, if we are to be effective witnesses, we too must be clothed with the power of the Holy Spirit.

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the 12 disciples in Ephesus is the seventh and last key outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Acts. You may remember that, in this study, we have already looked at six outpourings of the Spirit in Acts. These are Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4), the Second Jerusalem Outpouring (4:31), the Samaritan Outpouring (8:15-17), the Damascus Outpouring (9:17-18), and the Caesarean Outpouring (10:44-46). Now, in this lesson, we observe a seventh key outpouring of the Spirit. We call this outpouring the Ephesian Outpouring. As with the previous six outpourings in Acts, this outpouring results in powerful missionary witness. Also, as with the previous six outpourings, it demonstrates Luke's *empowering-results-in-witness pattern*.

This pattern was first presented in Acts 1:8, where Jesus said, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." This repeated pattern reveals Luke's primary reason for writing Acts. He wanted to call the church back to its Pentecostal and missionary roots.

The Spirit is doing the same today. He is empowering believers to be Christ's witnesses to the lost. If we will be empowered by the Spirit, and remain committed to God's mission, we too can become powerful witnesses for Christ.

When Paul laid hands on the 12 disciples "the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied." This same thing happened when the Spirit came on the 120 at Pentecost in Acts chapter 2 and the Gentiles in Caesarea in Acts chapter 10. According to Luke's teaching in Acts, one can expect two results when he or she is baptized in the Holy Spirit. First,

they will speak in tongues as the Spirit gives utterance. This is the “initial physical evidence” or “normative missional sign” that one has been baptized in the Holy Spirit. Second, they will become Spirit-empowered witnesses. This is the “functional result” and main purpose of one’s being baptized in the Holy Spirit.

The same is true today. When one is baptized in the Holy Spirit, they will speak in tongues as the Spirit enables them, and they will become powerful witnesses for Christ. Thus, as leaders in Christ’s church, we must ensure that we ourselves have been empowered by the Holy Spirit. We must further ensure that every member in our church has been baptized in the Spirit and mobilized as Christ’s witness to the lost. Then, together, we should go out and tell others about Jesus.

This lesson is **important** because we learned that every church member needs to be baptized in the Holy Spirit and empowered as Christ’s witness to the lost.

The **main truth** we learn from this lesson is that the experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is for all believers and that this experiences empowers us as Christ’s witnesses.

Let’s **review** some important truths we have learned from this lesson.

1. How does the Ephesian Outpouring fit into the book of Acts?
 - A. [PAUSE] If you answered that it is the seventh key outpouring of the Spirit in the book of Acts and that it demonstrates Luke’s *empowerment-results-in-witness pattern*, you answered correctly.
2. What was the first question Paul asked the 12 disciples in Ephesus?
 - A. [PAUSE] If you answered that Paul’s first question was, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed,” you are correct.
3. What was the spiritual condition of the 12 Ephesian disciples when Paul met them?
 - A. [PAUSE] If you answered that they were truly saved; however, they had not yet been baptized in the Holy Spirit, you are right.
4. What are the two normative results of a person’s being baptized in the Holy Spirit?
 - A. [PAUSE] If you answered, that they will speak in tongues as the Spirit enables them and they will become witnesses for Christ, you answered correctly.

You have two **assignments** for this lesson. First, you are to listen to it several more times, until you can tell the story of the Ephesian Outpouring. You should then gather some believers together and teach the lesson to them. Then lay hands on them and pray for them to be empowered by the Spirit, as Paul did with the 12 Ephesian disciples.