

THE HOLY GHOST GIVEN TO THE EPHESIANS

BIBLE TEXT : Acts 19:1-20

LESSON 338 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Happy is that people, whose God is the LORD" (Psalm 144:15). .

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Acts 19:1-20

¹ And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts 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.

⁸ And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.

⁹ But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.

¹⁰ And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

Paul Tells of the Holy Ghost

The Apostle Paul had visited Ephesus on his way to Jerusalem from Corinth on his second missionary journey. He had preached for a while to the Jews in their synagogue, and they had received his preaching and had wanted him to stay longer. At that time he could not stay, but now on his third missionary trip he came to Ephesus to remain for a while.

Paul found in Ephesus some disciples who were earnest believers and were following in all the teachings they had had, so he asked them if they had received the Holy Ghost. They did not know what he was talking about. They answered, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost."

A Step at a Time

When a person is first saved, he is so thrilled that he may not feel any need for more of God for a while. But as time passes, a hunger will come into his heart for something more. As he prays and consecrates his life to God, and believes for sanctification, he is again thrilled with a new experience from God. How holy he feels! What peace is in his heart! What love God gives him! Through this experience he is given greater power to hold fast the faith that God has given him, and to overcome sin. The root of sin has been removed.

There is yet more for the person who wants God's best. Jesus told His disciples before he went away that they should tarry in Jerusalem until they had received the promise of the Father, which was the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Jesus had prayed for their sanctification, and had breathed with the Holy Ghost (John 20:22), but they were yet to be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Something greater was still awaiting them. "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence" (Acts 1:5).

Power for Service

There was going to be much work for the followers of Jesus to do in spreading the Gospel. They would need help from Heaven. Jesus said: "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). It is that power which everyone needs who wants to work for the Lord.

We are not saved to sit and enjoy a life of peace and ease and comfort. The blessings of the Lord are marvellous, and He wants us to be happy; but no one is so happy as the one who is serving others. We are blessed in order that we might be a blessing. The promise of His being with us is given to those who will go for Him. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, . . . and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:19, 20).

It was of this baptism that Paul was speaking to the Ephesians. Had they received this glorious experience, which would give them that power on their lives to be witnesses in all the earth? Did they have the Comforter, whom Jesus had promised, in their lives? Why, they did not even know that they could have such a great blessing from God!

Water Baptism

word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

¹¹ And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul:

¹² So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.

¹³ Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.

¹⁴ And there were seven sons of *one* Sceva, a Jew, *and* chief of the priests, which did so.

¹⁵ And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?

¹⁶ And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

¹⁷ And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.

¹⁸ And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds.

¹⁹ Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all *men*: and they counted the price of them, and found *it* fifty thousand *pieces* of silver.

²⁰ So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.

Paul asked another question. If the Ephesians had not heard about the Holy Ghost, what kind of ceremony had they observed when they were baptized in water? Jesus' commandment for water baptism had been that they baptize "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:19). If they had been baptised that way they would at least have known that there was a Holy Ghost.

The Ephesians answered that they had been baptized according to John's baptism. We know very little about the baptism of John; but we do know that all his work was to prepare people for the coming of Jesus. His message was: "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Many people had flocked to hear John, and some thought that he was the Messiah. But John answered: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire" (Matthew 3:11). So the baptism of John was not enough.

When Jesus finished His work of redemption on earth and went back to Heaven, a new era came into being. When the baptism of the Holy Ghost came upon the 120 in the upper room ten days after Jesus went to Heaven, the dispensation of the Holy Ghost began.

For Those Afar Off

The people who received the baptism of the Holy Ghost that day were not the only ones who were to receive it. We have studied about the Gentiles upon whom the Holy Ghost fell during the years that followed Pentecost (Lessons 290, 304). This visit of Paul to the Ephesians was 23 years after Pentecost, and about twelve men of their company received the Holy Ghost, too. The Apostle Peter had said: "The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:39). We are among those who are "afar off," and we, too, receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost if we meet God's conditions.

When these twelve received the Holy Ghost, they spoke in other tongues, a language unknown to themselves, just as the 120 on the day of Pentecost did. That is still the sign God gives to everyone who receives the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

Paul did not consider his work done when twelve men received the baptism of the Holy Ghost. He continued to go into the synagogue to preach about Jesus so that others also might believe and receive the gift of God. But, as has always been the case wherever the Gospel has been preached, some did not believe, and they caused trouble. Paul knew that it would do no good to argue with people who did not want to believe; so he took his disciples, those who did believe the teachings of Jesus, and continued his meetings in a school where they did not have to listen to the arguments of the unbelievers. For two years he stayed with these converts, until all the people in the country round about, both the Jews and the Greeks, had heard about the Lord Jesus.

Divine Healing

When Paul preached Jesus, he not only preached about salvation, sanctification and the baptism of the Holy Ghost but also preached divine healing. And more than preaching it, Paul believed that God would answer his prayers when he prayed for people. God worked great miracles because Paul believed.

The practice of sending out handkerchiefs, which have been anointed with oil and prayed over by the ministers for the healing of the sick, began at this time. Handkerchiefs and aprons were

sent out from Paul to those who were at a distance and who were sick, or were afflicted with evil spirits. God would heal them. God is still hearing and answering the prayer of faith today for the healing of the sick, and many people have felt the healing touch when they have applied the handkerchiefs, which have been anointed and prayed over for them.

The Devils Believe

There were some Jews at Ephesus who had tried to put away evil spirits by their own rituals. It was something like our modern-day devil worship. After they heard Paul cast out evil spirits in the name of Jesus, they tried to do it too. But they had not been saved by the Blood of Jesus, and they had no right to try to work miracles in the name of Jesus. The evil spirits know Jesus. James one time said: "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble" (James 2:19). That is more than many people do.

The evil spirit in the man whom the wicked Jews were trying to heal, said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?" The man who had the evil spirit jumped upon the wicked Jews, so that they ran from the house naked and wounded.

When the people heard what had happened they were afraid, and they wanted to know more about Jesus. Many of them were saved, and they brought their witch books and burned them publicly. It meant something for them to give up their charms and other things they used in devil worship. They thought they had to go through all their forms of worship to ward off evil spirits, just as many superstitious people and the heathen do today. But the Gospel of Jesus Christ has more power than Satan. Whenever devil worshipers will look to Jesus in simple faith, and let Him save their souls, the power of evil is broken. The evil spirits cannot control them any more, and the people are made happy. Devil worship never makes people happy, but the Gospel of Jesus Christ does.

Good Tidings

The word Gospel means "good tidings." When the angel announced the birth of Jesus, he said, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people" (Luke 2:10). And when the Prophet Joel told about the dispensation of the Holy Ghost, he said, "Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice" (Joel 2:21). When Jesus gave some instructions to His followers, He said, "Happy are ye if ye do them" (John 13:17).

"So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed," under Paul's preaching. Wherever the Word of God is lifted up, God will work in the salvation of souls. The Word tells about Jesus, and He said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (John 12:32).

QUESTIONS

1. Where did Paul go when he started on his third missionary trip?
2. How long did he stay there?
3. What questions did he ask the people of Ephesus?
4. What does sanctification do for a person?
5. What do we receive after we are baptized with the Holy Ghost?
6. What did Jesus promise to the people who would go into all the earth and preach the Gospel?
7. For whom did Peter say the Holy Ghost was sent?
8. How many times does the Bible record that the baptism of the Holy Ghost was given after Pentecost?
9. What happened during Paul's ministry at Ephesus concerning divine healing and the casting out of evil spirits?
10. What did the evil spirit say to the wicked Jews?