Paul in Ephesus

[Text: Acts 19:1-7]

Paul had stayed 18 months in Corinth. He stayed even longer in Ephesus.

These 7 verses are often misinterpreted because of an unfortunate translation in the KJV (*“Have ye received the Holy Ghost* ***since*** *ye believed?”)* as against other translations that render it differently as (*“Did you receive the Holy Spirit* ***when*** *you believed?”)*

### Two views on the Baptism of the Holy Spirit

**View 1** Two-stage Initiation view held by Pentecostal Churches

1. First work of grace at conversion, where the Holy Spirit is given but without power.

2. Second work of grace or “Baptism of the Holy Spirit”, after a time gap, where the believer is filled with power and gifts for ministry.

3. Evidence of “Baptism of the Holy Spirit” is Speaking in tongues. Weak Christians do not speak in tongues and lack the real working of the Holy Spirit.

The following events (with a gap between conversion and the Baptism of the Holy Spirit when the Apostles were present/layed hands) are shown in support of this view:

* Day of Pentecost (When they received power, they became transformed bold men)
* Case of the Samaritan believers
* Case of Cornelius

Whether one agrees or disagrees with the doctrine of second work of grace, we have to be thankful to the Pentecostal churches for the emphasis placed on the working of the Holy Spirit in the life of Christians.

**View 2** One-Stage Initiation view

1. All modern translations like the NIV, NASB, NKJV and the ESV translate *“Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?”* The translations oppose the second work of grace idea.

2. In the first group of the 120, the gap was due to the historical timing of things; the Spirit was not given until Jesus ascended.

3. In the other groups, the gap is because the book of Acts records the transition in redemptive history where God makes it clear that His gifts were no longer limited to Jews. The baptism of the Holy Spirit, Luke records in Acts, follows the geographical sequence foretold by Jesus in Acts 1:8: First the Jews in Jerusalem, then God-fearers in Judea, then the Samaritans in Samaria, and finally Gentiles, who represent the ends of the earth. So these cases are not typical for Christians. *Acts 11:15-17*

4. Apostle Paul *(1 Cor.12:13)* teaches that the Baptism through the Spirit is given to **all Christians**—*all baptised, all were made to drink*. Prior to that, they had been Jews, Samaritans, Gentile God-fearers or disciples of John the Baptist. Through the baptism of the Spirit they were incorporated into the church. They became members of the body of Christ. When we separate the baptism of the Holy Spirit from conversion, we end up with second-class citizens in the kingdom of God. Christians may be at different points in their sanctification and level of Christian maturity, but no Christian lacks the Holy Spirit in his life.

5. In the book of Acts, the baptism in the Holy Spirit sometimes resulted in speaking in tongues (Acts 2:4; 10:44-46; Acts 19:6). In other cases, it is not mentioned (Acts 2:41; 4:4; 5:14; 13:12, 48; 14:1; 17:12, 34; 18:8). They were not asked to wait till they were baptised by the Holy Spirit. Even Paul says all believers do not speak in tongues (1 Cor. 12:30). Therefore speaking in tongues cannot be the evidence that someone has received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

### Who are these disciples in Ephesus?

They were still living in the Old Covenant era. They were not aware that the new covenant era had been ushered in by Jesus, and that those who believe in Him are baptised in His name and receive the distinctive blessing of the new age, the indwelling Spirit. John the Baptist had baptised these men when they repented for the forgiveness of their sins. John had taught them the first half of the gospel. He also indicated that there was a second half to the gospel — belief in the One coming after him. Old Testament saints were saved by believing in the Messiah to come. After Jesus came, it was a necessity for these “Old Testament saints” to hear of Jesus and trust in Him personally.

**Were these 12 disciples already Christians?** (Acts 19:3) According to the two-stage view, these 12 were already Christians and they are now receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit. While those of the one-stage view believe that these 12 disciples are not Christians yet.

For one to be counted a Christian (a) there must be repentance, (b) there must be faith in Jesus, (c) there must be the new spiritual birth and the presence of the Holy Spirit. That is what makes a Christian a Christian. Biblical faith has both object (Jesus) and content (knowing that **Jesus is who the Bible says He is** and that **He has done what the Bible says He has done**.)

**Was Apollos a Christian when he met Aquila and Priscilla? (**Acts 18:25) John’s baptism led him to teach accurately the things concerning Jesus because he understood that Jesus was the fulfilment of John’s testimony. The 12 on the other hand do not seem to have believed in Jesus. While Apollos required only some further instruction from Aquila and Priscilla these 12 had to be re-baptised the only such incident in the Bible. Therefore I believe that Apollos was already a Christian when he met Aquila and Priscilla.

### Tongues

We have already discussed this in [**Tongues in the Book of Acts (ACTS007)—-Speaking in Tongues**](http://www.sermoncloud.com/tamil-bible-studies/tongues-in-the-book-of-acts-acts007/) & [**Tongues in 1Corinthians (ACTS008) —– Speaking in Tongues**](http://www.sermoncloud.com/tamil-bible-studies/tongues-in-1corinthians-acts008/)