Acts Chapter 19 Verses 1 – 2

* This scene is ***perplexing*** to *say the least.* Paul recognizes that they are **believers**, saved…even ***disciples***…but the text appears to indicate that something concerned him. We have no record of anywhere else…we have no reason to believe (or history of Paul) ever asking this question of another group of believers…this was not his custom…this is not standard operating procedure…Paul sensed that something was ***off*** within this group.
* Now, the next question, is ***what?*** Not given to us…but…we can do better than guess. How do we know if a person, people or group, church, believer, disciple…how can we *tell, sense and discern* that they are walking in the Spirit (Full beards? Skinny jeans? Christian station on if you go start their car!? HA – NO)! Then how? How can we tell if a believer, disciple, Christian is filled and being filled with the Holy Spirit? Is it speaking in tongues? Is it miracle working? It is knowledge? Is it prophecy? Is it huge successful filled churches? In truth, Biblically, it’s none of those things. How can we ***sense*** an apple tree is an apple tree? We can do better than guess. FRUIT!! Galatians 5, and specifically verse 22 tells us that the fruit of the Spirit is…***love.***
* But here’s something I want you to consider…because the world has gotten this so messed up in these last days that even Christians are confused about this little itsy bitsy word…and their confusion affects their *beliefs, behaviors, habits, loyalties and practices*…are you willing for all that to change as you learn something right now!? Love is the fruit of the Spirit but ***a very good imposter for love can also be the fruit of the flesh!*** Here’s the discriminator. **WHAT is the object of that love?**
* The fruit of the Spirit, the love that is truly holy…the object is Jesus! Not self. Not lust. Not the things of this world or the ***rights*** of the flesh. ***The object is God.*** ***If the object of the love you so claim to wield is not God Himself…then its not the fruit of the Spirit!*** The fruit of the Spirit is love…first for God…His ways, His concerns, His praise, Him! And then it is for the right-standing of others with Him. ***To bring others closer to Him, to see them stronger in Him…***
* Do you see how that is SO different then what we are seeing and have accepted even in the church in these last days!? From the extreme of those that worship ***lust*** and ***human rights*** and call that ***love***…to the other side of the extreme of the conservative Christian who is faithful in all things and yet remains hard and self-serving and dull to what God would have them to do moment to moment and so they change and grow ***superficially*** but no strides are ever really made, no real progression…they don’t humble themselves. They, as Paul wrote to Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:5 and 7, “*They have a form of godliness but deny its power…always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.”*
* Paul arrives in Ephesus, finds believers…disciples…but perhaps he would find the same thing right here, right now, in this place today…and he senses something is off…, This question, really he is asking, *“Are you surrendered, living filled by and for and at the command and direction of the Holy Spirit?!”* That’s the question here…why? I would submit an answer that is Biblically supported…***because they’re love was anemic, degenerate and off the mark.***

Acts Chapter 19 Verses 3 – 5

* So interesting, this appears to be a ***second baptism***. They were already baptized, right? And then when they receive the full revelation, they’re like, *“Everyone in the pool!”* HA! (And you know the best exercise for when you’re in the pool right? **POOL-UPS!** HA!!! Ok that was bad… How do you say “hi” to someone when you’re swimming? Just wave…wow…I even hate that one! HA!) But watch what happens now…

Acts Chapter 19 Verses 6 – 7

* There are all kinds of discussion that can be had around what we just read. First, there are those that say this is the ***formula*** for salvation. *Be baptized in the name of Jesus and speak in tongues.* The problem is that belief, I’ll call it **false doctrine**, is ***entirely contradictory*** to other scripture and specifically the words of Jesus. Jesus said in John 3:16, *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever BELIEVES in Him should not perish but have everlasting life!”* They asked Jesus once, *“What must we do to do the works of God?”* Jesus responded in John 6:29, *“This is the work of God, that you BELIEVE in Him whom He sent.”*
* The jailer said to Paul in Acts 16:30, *“What must I do to be saved?”* Paul responded in Acts 16:31, *“BELIEVE on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved!”* Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus in Ephesians 2:8, *“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not works, lest anyone should boast!”* You see this bit about you must be baptized and you must speak in tongues or you aren’t truly saved is ENTIRELY a doctrine of demons and ENTIRELY against what the Bible actually teaches. **It must be rejected!**
* And this scripture, this verse set is not saying they were baptized in the name of Jesus ***for*** salvation. They are already disciples the Bible says….Paul said to them, “*When (or since) you believed?”* They are already believers…but what we are seeing here is what is **so very missing** in the heart and walks of so many today? ***The second baptism.*** Another can of worms creaks open! **HA**! The coming UPON of the Holy Spirit! ***There is a real difference between a cup that is filled and a cup that is overflowing…***
* Have you ever met someone *so sensitive* to the Holy Spirit…**so alive…so filled…so willing** to go this way or that way if that is what God wants of them…and then you meet someone that is *hard, loyal only to themselves, not hospitable, not accommodating*…and yet **both** sing worship loudly…**both** study their Bibles, **both** serve at the church…even some are pastors…what’s the difference? There is so much chatter and debate on this topic…a second touch, a second blessing, a second baptism…I don’t understand why folks reject this because it is ***explicit*** in the scriptures! Jesus said that He would send the Holy Spirit…John 14:15-17…and then, after Jesus died on the cross, paying once and for all for the sins of the world, He resurrected and came to them in John 20:22 and breathed on them and said to them, *“Receive the Holy Spirit.”* The indwelling presence of God within man…***John 14 fulfilled…***
* And yet…Acts 1:4-8…They **already had the indwelling presence** of the Holy Spirit…John chapter 20…but Jesus said to them there yet remains another work, another baptism, the baptism ***with*** the Holy Spirit and you shall receive power, you’ll actually trust Me, represent me…**things will be different…**
* Here’s the picture we have in Acts 19 and the type that is laid out through scripture. When we believe, we receive the indwelling presence of God, we are sealed up by the Holy Spirit, we are saved…**and yet there still remains more**…We, just like them, receive power to live unto to God, to be His witnesses when the Holy Spirit comes upon us… There is no way…it is impossible to live as the Bible commands without the Holy Spirit empowering us… We read the words of Jesus and the words of scripture…that we should love our fellow man, do well to those who curse us, give of ourselves and our resources and serve others and we agree that it is all good…and yet become so frustrated at times attempting to live it out… Even Paul dealt with this…truly it is **impossible** without the power of the Holy Spirit. We need to overflow…
* **Check the picture.** The nation of Israel, reborn when they left Egypt…how did they do that? Through the midst of the Red Sea. ***A picture of baptism.*** And then **what**? They walk through the wilderness…dealing with the flesh…walking out the rebellion in the heart of the nation, and then what…they entered the ***promised land***…how? Through the River Jordan! A picture and type of a second **dunk!**
* Jesus, born of the Spirit…filled with the Spirit…one with the Father and the Holy Spirit **His whole life**…preaching and teaching in the synagogue and confounding the wisest of all at age 12…and yet…at age 30 comes to John and says, *“Dunk Me!”* And when that happened, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him as a dove…came upon Him…and from then on out He began and carried out His ***public ministry!***
* So all that to say, this picture we have in front of us in Acts **19 is not a recipe for salvation**, it is a revelation of the coming upon us, you, me of the Holy Spirit. And what was the indication that this has and is occurring? The first part of our conversation…***love.*** The fruit of the Spirit! ***Are you growing in love for the Lord and love for the brethren? Like markedly growing?*** That is the sign, the tell, the mark…the fruit of the Spirit. Let me tell you right now…if you are not one who embraces change and desires repentance then you don’t yet have **any clue** what love really is…There is so much more for you! You yet do not know the full testimony of the power and freedom of the Holy Spirit!
* Its not *tongues,* its not *prophecy*…there may have even been a gap of time here…just look at what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 13:1-2…***it’s love***…***love is the antithesis of weakness…it is the enemy of failure…it is the highest form of courage and its the fiercest weapon of warfare***…and it is the power each one of us need and require in order to truly be witnesses of God – Higher than all the earth! The key to the promised land…the second baptism…turn from your rebellious heart and trust the Lord.
* Let me point you to a key verse as we close…it’s Acts 5:32, *“We are His witnesses to these things…and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given…to those who obey Him!”* I won’t obey if I don’t believe…and **if I don’t commit**, I don’t believe. Have you yet walked out the rebellion in your own heart? Only you can do that…And then there were 12…the number of *government, order, right standing… promised land….* This is as we ought to be. And this is the life abundant that Jesus promised…***is this you?***