

Special Study

PAUL'S POWER TO GIVE CHARISMATIC POWER

(Acts 19)

- A. There is much ambiguous, scripturally-imprecise and confusing exegesis of Acts 19:1-7 being done today.
1. "Have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed? The apostle Paul asked this very important question of twelve saved disciples of Christ, at Ephesus. Acts 19:2 . . . Later . . . when they prayed together, 'The Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied.' This should have been expected since in all four gospels we are told that Jesus will baptize with the Holy Ghost." From—*The Baptism in The Holy Spirit According to God's Word*, a tract by the Full Gospel Assembly, 3688 Lee Rd., Shaker Heights, Ohio, 44120.
 - a. Note: The writer *omitted* the statement of the Scripture that "Paul laid their hands on them. . . ." and *inserted* something that is not even in the text, "Later . . . when they prayed"!
 - b. The same tract says, "Must I speak in Tongues? Yes, this is important! . . . To refuse tongues is to refuse to yield yourself completely to God . . ." and further on, "It is very important to pray in tongues! Practice this new language of the Spirit until it becomes as natural as breathing." Why does it need *practice* to become natural if it is supernatural?
 - c. The tract also states, "To manifest God's love for our fellow man we must have supernatural power."
 2. From another interesting but ambiguous and self-contradictory book *A Handbook on Holy Spirit Baptism*, by Don Bashan, pub. Gateway Outreach, p. 16, "At times baptism in the Holy Spirit may come immediately following conversion, like in Acts 10. . . . Most Christians today receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit only after instructions and specific prayer. . . ." Cornelius was not "converted" until baptism in water.
 - a. From the same book, p. 100, "How can I receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. . . . By no means should anyone who is not a believing Christian pray for baptism in the Holy Spirit. . . ." Cornelius received it before he was a Christian.

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- b. Page 104 tells how one knows he has received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. “At this point you may actually *feel* the presence of the Holy Spirit, physically. His presence may come as a warmth enveloping you, or as a silent powerful Presence enfolding you. You may experience a tingling sensation or a gentle vibration as if touched by an electric current. But even if you feel nothing, rest quietly in the confidence that the Holy Spirit is now coming upon you in power and is about to furnish you with a new language of prayer and praise to God.”
3. Why all this confusion? Because of poor hermeneutics. People let their hermeneutics be influenced by their emotions and/or psychological needs.
 - a. Many people want to lump everything said and/or promised concerning the ministry of the Holy Spirit into one category—the supernatural baptism of the Holy Spirit.
 - b. This brief study proposes to show that there are definite, scriptural differences and distinctions:
 - (1) all ministries and works of the Holy Spirit are not alike in degree or manifestation.
 - (2) specifically, the power of the apostle Paul was not power to baptize anyone in the Holy Spirit, nor even power to become an agent through whom Christ would baptize anyone in the Holy Spirit,
 - (3) specifically, to show that Paul and the other apostles could impart only the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit by the laying on of their hands, and that that power ceased when the apostles died.
- B. Paul did not give the “Baptism” of the Holy Spirit in Acts 19 because there are only two instances of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures.
 1. Acts 2, the Day of Pentecost
 - a. Nothing could be clearer than the fact that it was the Apostles and the Apostles only, who received Holy Spirit baptism on the Day of Pentecost.
 - (1) It was not some psychical or emotional experience for the purpose of converting those who received it—they did not need to be converted.

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- (2) It was an outward manifestation, a special miracle for a Divine purpose.
 - (a) It was something that could be seen and heard (not felt).
 - (b) There were immediate effects; they spoke with foreign languages; they spoke as the Spirit gave them utterance.
 - (c) Only the apostles spoke in other tongues; and very obviously, they spoke in the different native languages represented by that audience.
 - (d) They gave utterance only to the words which the Spirit placed upon their tongues. They themselves did not comprehend the scope of their utterances: Peter did not comprehend that the "promise was to all who were afar off."
- (3) Holy Spirit baptism was not for the purpose of converting anyone.
 - (a) Holy Spirit baptism was to be conferred by Christ as a promise to be fulfilled.
 - (b) Water baptism was a command to be obeyed by all who wished forgiveness and salvation.

THIS IS THE FUNDAMENTAL DISTINCTION
BETWEEN THE BAPTISM OF THE GREAT
COMMISSION AND HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM.
THE FORMER WAS A COMMAND TO BE
OBEYED: THE LATTER WAS A PROMISE TO
BE FULFILLED DIRECTLY FROM HEAVEN.
The former to be administered by any evangelizer;
the latter was administered only by Christ.
- (4) Holy Spirit baptism was a special miracle for
 - (a) clothing the apostles with divine authority, power and infallibility; and for incorporating the Jews (Gentiles in Acts 10-11) into the Body of Christ.
 - (b) With their authority and infallibility guaranteed and perpetuated in their writings, there was no longer any necessity for special authority or infallibility.
 - (c) Hence, we find no evidence in the New Testament that the apostles ever conferred their authority upon any other man or group of men. THEY HAD NO

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SUCCESSORS. THEY COULD NOT *BAPTIZE* ANYONE WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT. ONLY CHRIST COULD DO THAT.

2. Acts 10-11, Cornelius

- a. Nothing could be clearer than that even the Jewish apostles had difficulty accepting their own Old Testament prophets that Gentiles were to become members of the Messiah's kingdom.
 - (1) They persisted in preaching the Gospel to the Jews only for several years following the day of Pentecost.
 - (2) Finally, a series of divine interventions became necessary to break down this wall of prejudice and bring about the admission of the Gentiles.
 - (3) God did it in such a way as to leave no doubt in the minds of the Jews . . . by Holy Spirit Baptism. There are no Holy Spirit baptisms between Acts 2 and the one of Cornelius!
- b. What happened in connection with the conversion of Cornelius does not happen with any other conversion in the book of Acts,
 - (1) and even this did not cause the conversion nor was it a result of the conversion . . . it came directly and arbitrarily from Heaven.
 - (2) It certainly was not to give Cornelius faith.
 - (3) It was not to purify his heart.
 - (4) Nor was it to make Cornelius and his household Christians . . . they became Christians the same way all other persons became Christians in New Testament times, by repenting, believing and being immersed in water (Acts 10:47-48).
 - (5) That text substantiates beyond any possibility of doubt that the Holy Spirit baptism was a promise to be fulfilled directly from Heaven, whereas Christian baptism was a command to be obeyed by believers; and that the baptism permanently incorporated into the structure of the Church was *not* Holy Spirit baptism, but baptism in water!
 - (6) The Holy Spirit baptism of Cornelius' household demonstrated once for all that the blessings of the New Covenant were for Gentiles as well as Jews AND ON THE SAME TERMS!

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The *only* instances of Holy Spirit Baptism recorded in the New Testament (Acts 2, 10-11) had no connection with conversion regeneration or sanctification of the saints. It was not conferred for the purpose of giving faith to the non-believer or purifying the sinful heart; nor is there any evidence that it was bestowed in answer to prayer. It is not connected in any direct way with the remission of sins.

It was conferred upon the apostles as representative of the Jews at Pentecost and upon Cornelius as representative of the Gentiles to signify God's acceptance of both Jew and Gentile into the kingdom of Christ on the same terms. Those are the only two instances of which we have any scripture record of the baptism of the Holy Spirit (we may safely assume it was given to the apostle Paul as one born out of due season).

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit ceased when its ultimate end was accomplished. No person has any justification from the Scripture for asking for, expecting, or claiming Holy Spirit baptism today!

C. Paul did give the charismatic power of the Holy Spirit to some Christians.

1. The greatest measure of Spirit-power ever bestowed upon human beings was, as we have looked at, the **OVERWHELMING MEASURE** (or, the Baptism).
2. The charismatic power of the Spirit is inferior to the overwhelming.
3. This is not my attempt to impose limitations upon the operation of God's Spirit.
 - a. It is not a question of power, but of fact.
 - b. *How* The Spirit manifests Himself and the channels through which He exerts His powers are clearly indicated by Scripture.
 - c. Any other point of reference as to how He functions (human reason, emotion, alleged miracle) cannot be depended upon.
4. The charismatic power was:
 - a. conferred upon some Christians
 - b. in the apostolic age,
 - c. inferior to the Baptism of the Spirit,
 - d. conferred not by the Lord from Heaven, but by the laying on of the hands of the apostles.
 - e. primarily for evidential purposes, to confirm their message,

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- f. commonly designated “gifts” and listed by Paul in I Corinthians 12.
5. There are some cases of the conferring of the evidential power of the Spirit preliminary to Paul’s giving of it in Acts 19 which will help in over-all understanding of it.
- a. The first case of miracles performed by anyone other than an apostle is described in Acts 8.
- (1) Philip the evangelist, 8:6-8
- (a) Philip given this power when the apostles laid hands on him, Acts 6:1-6
- (b) He went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed unto them Christ, Acts 8:5.
- (c) Simon the converted sorcerer continued with Philip; Simon was a baptized Christian, but did not have the power to do miracles; he wanted to buy the power.
- (2) It was not until the apostles from Jerusalem went down to Samaria and laid their hands on the people whom Philip had converted that they received the charismatic powers of the Holy Spirit, Acts 8:17.
- (a) Simon still did not have the power of the Holy Spirit the others had and sought to buy it.
- (b) If the baptismal power or even the charismatic power of the Holy Spirit belongs to all Christians and can be gotten by prayer only, why didn’t the Samaritan Christians have it? Why couldn’t Philip, who did have it, pass it on to these Christians?
- (c) If it is so imperative for every Christian to have, why didn’t Simon have it? He recognized that it came *only* by the laying on of the hands of the apostles!

OF COURSE THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WAS NOT FROM THE APOSTLES, PER SE IT DID NOT ORIGINATE WITH THEM THEY WERE THE SPIRIT’S INSTRUMENTS.

b. The case of Timothy

- (1) Some think that the “laying on of the hands of the eldership” (I Tim. 4:14) imparted to Timothy the charismatic gift of the Holy Spirit.

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- (2) We know that the laying on of hands was done by persons *other* than the apostles for purposes *other* than the conferring of charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:2; James 5:14, etc.).
 - (3) Paul explicitly states in II Timothy 1:6 that Timothy did not receive his special gift of the Holy Spirit at the hands of the elders, **BUT BY THE LAYING ON OF PAUL'S HANDS!**
 - (4) Timothy laid hands on some (I Tim. 5:22) but no mention is made that he conferred the charismatic power of the Holy Spirit in so doing.
- c. There is *no evidence whatever in the New Testament* that the early Christians who were not apostles, had the power themselves to confer these extraordinary charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit on others.
- (1) It is clear that the impartation of the charismatic power of the Holy Spirit *required the personal presence of an apostle.*
 - (2) However much the apostle Paul may have desired to impart some charisma to his brethren at Rome, he could not do so without visiting them personally (Rom. 1:11-12).

Paul could not even confer these miraculous gifts by telling the Christians at Rome to "lay their hands on his inspired epistle" which they received from him and could touch! Paul could not even pray for them from a distance and confer charismatic power.

6. Paul in Acts 19

- a. We do not know why Paul asked them whether they had received the Holy Spirit.
 - (1) Actually the original Greek text omits the word *given*. 19:2 KJV ASV
 - (2) This may indicate they did not know the Holy Spirit *existed*.
 - (3) Regardless of their lack of knowledge, Paul knew immediately they had not been baptized in the name (authority) of Jesus Christ. If they had been baptized in water according to the Great Commission, they would have known the Holy Spirit existed.
- b. Paul's question as to whether they had received the Spirit

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when they believed, does not say whether he referred to the miraculous or the indwelling of the Spirit.

(1) However, we do know that when he saw something was wrong with their water baptism he baptized them.

(2) **HE THEN LAID HIS HANDS ON THEM AND CONFERRED THE HOLY SPIRIT IN A MIRACULOUS WAY!**

c. We cannot receive the charismatic power of the Spirit today as did those in Acts 19.

(1) If we could, it would mean that everyone who was actually baptized into Christ and saved, should have the apostle's hands laid on them that they might receive the Spirit.

(2) If that is so, we cannot be Christians today because there are no apostles to lay hands on us and confer the Spirit in this way.

(3) It would mean that if one were really a Christian, he would speak with tongues or languages and prophesy by inspiration of the Spirit.

d. Why did Paul confer the miraculous Spirit-charisma on these men? To prove that God approved of Paul's baptizing them again in the name of Jesus instead of allowing them to continue in John the Baptist's baptism. That was the purpose of Pentecost Holy Spirit miracles—to supercede John the Baptist's baptism.

D. The Purpose of the Charismatic Power of the Holy Spirit was *Evidential*.

1. Its primary and almost sole purpose was to confirm the Word that was preached by apostles, evangelists and other selected Christians.

2. It may have had a secondary purpose to establish the saints in their most holy faith—**BUT ONLY TO CONFIRM THE WORD BEING PREACHED TO THE SAINTS . . . IT WAS ONLY AS THE SAINTS OBEYED THE WORD PREACHED THAT THEY WERE EDIFIED . . . THE CHARISMATIC GIFTS SIMPLY CONFIRMED THE PREACHED WORD AS AUTHORITATIVE!**

3. Consider these scriptures: Mark 16:20; Rom. 1:11; Heb. 2:3-4; I Cor. 2:1-5; Rom. 15:18-19.

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4. In the infancy of the Church, when the local congregations everywhere were compelled to depend upon the oral instruction of the apostles and their co-laborers for guidance in faith and practice, God graciously confirmed the Word by signs and miracles in those selected to preach.
5. A child just learning to walk often has to rely upon its parents for the additional strength and guidance that it needs. So the Church. When the Church was still a child, she spake as a child, she felt as a child, she thought as a child; but when the Church became a grown integrated man, she put away childish things (I Cor. 13:11; Eph. 4:13-16). When the body of Christ was fully formed (both Jew and Gentile incorporated) and permanently established (with her elders, deacons and evangelists); when Truth was fully revealed and embodied in the New Testament THEN THE SUPERNATURAL SUPPORT BY WHICH SHE WAS SUSTAINED THROUGHOUT THE PERIOD OF HER INFANCY, THE CHARISMATIC MEASURE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WAS NO LONGER NEEDED, AND PASSED AWAY!
6. Most certainly, the special charismatic measure of the Holy Spirit was not given to the primitive Church as toys with which they were to amuse themselves in the presence of a cynical world. They did not need it to motivate them to go everywhere to preach the word; once the Word of Christ's death and resurrection was validated by preachers who proved their message by gifts, those who accepted went everywhere preaching it. Even the apostles did not have the power to use their gifts of healing whenever they had any sick person.
 - (1) Why would Paul leave his friend and traveling companion sick, having the power to heal him (II Tim. 4:20)?
 - (2) Why could not Paul, or some other Christian with charismatic power, remove Paul's thorn in the flesh? (II Cor. 12:7ff.).
 - (3) *The Handbook on Holy Spirit Baptism*, p. 22 says, "Just as there are reasons why people do not respond to the gospel message, so there are many reasons why people do not respond miraculously when a prayer for healing is offered." Page 24, "If those who insist the age of miracles has ended had lived in Jesus' day, the age of miracles might never have begun."

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Answer: The miracle of charismatic power in its working did not depend upon faith or expectation. Jesus worked miracles on people who could not have believed in Him, on people who did not believe in Him, and so did the apostles.

E. Duration of the Charismatic Measure of the Holy Spirit

1. The conclusion from the foregoing studies is that since no one but the apostles had the power to impart the charismatic measure of the Spirit; and this they did only by the laying on of their hands personally, **IT FOLLOWS THAT WHEN THE APOSTLES CLOSED THEIR EARTHLY LABORS AND WENT TO THEIR ETERNAL REWARD, THE POWER TO IMPART THE EVIDENTIAL MEASURE OF THE SPIRIT CEASED.**
2. What the apostles conferred was **NOT** the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Only Jesus from heaven, directly, conferred that measure of the Spirit and that in only two recorded instances.
3. When all those Christians died who had received this measure (charismatic) at the hands of an apostle, (the Christians scripturally unable to pass it on) the charismatic manifestations of the Holy Spirit naturally ceased to be wrought. **THIS IS MADE VERY CLEAR IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.**

CONCLUSION

The Holy Spirit

by Don DeWalt, College Press Publishing Company

5. What shall we say has happened to certain persons of our day who claim to have been baptized in the Holy Spirit?

We shall not at all doubt their sincerity, nor shall we say nothing of import has happened to them. We shall be forced to say by our study of the subject that their experience is *not* the baptism in the Holy Spirit as we find it described in the book of Acts.

What has happened to such persons is self-induced. Please do not forget that Mormons (Latter Day Saints), claim the very same experiences of speaking in tongues. Christian Scientists also claim supernatural healings. Mohammedans claim supernatural aid in their

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conquests for Allah. The simple fact that something strange happened to certain persons does not mean God has visited them.

We must never make the tragic mistake of believing in an experience, or in the testimony of an experience, and then attempting to support such experience with the Bible.

We cannot offer a logical explanation for every experience—it is not necessary that we do so—all we need is a knowledge of the Word of truth concerning the experience.

What has happened to a number of our brethren in the past few months might be explained in a number of ways—the important fact is, “Does the Word of God support it?”

From my study I cannot see Biblical support for present-day claims to the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

The Eternal Spirit, Vol. 2

by C. C. Crawford, College Press Publishing Company

Friend, you need not pray for Christ to come down from Heaven to save you; you need not pray for someone to come back from the dead to save you. You have the Word, the Word of faith, which is being preached in every community in the land, the Word that Christ died for your sins, that He was buried, and that He was raised up the third day (I Cor. 15:1-5), and that God's gift of salvation may be your possession on the conditions of your belief in Christ, repentance toward Christ, confession of Christ, and baptism into Christ. Miraculous manifestations, ecstasies, trances, visions, powers and endowments are not necessary at all to your personal salvation. You have the Word of the living God,—the Gospel which is the power of God unto salvation. You are fully capable of hearing, accepting and obeying that Gospel any time you desire and will to do so; and if you refuse or neglect to do so, you are utterly without excuse. If you will hear neither Moses nor the Prophets, neither Christ nor the Apostles, you would not be persuaded even if one should rise from the dead (Luke 16:31).