

## **THE FATAL FLAWS OF CHARISMANIA – Fatal Flaw #7: Failing to Distinguish the Critical Difference Between Water Baptism and Spirit Baptism (Part Six of Eight)**

**Connection #5** consists of what took place in Acts 19:1-7, and requires some explanation in regard to the spiritual condition of the disciples whom Paul encountered in Ephesus. Does Paul's reference to them as "when you believed" and Luke's description as "disciples," confirm that they were converts to Christ? Not necessarily. The fact that they were unaware of the existence of the Holy Spirit would indicate otherwise. Certainly, Paul expresses his own doubt in v3 by asking them, "into what then were you baptized?" Their answer, in experiencing John's baptism only, prompts Paul to relate to them the ultimate purpose of the ministry of John the Baptist in v4 – **"Paul said, 'John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after Him, that is, in Jesus.'"**

Their response to Paul's clarification results in an additional baptism, this time, "in the name of the Lord Jesus" (19:5); indicating the likelihood of a conversion experience at that moment, as a result of their interaction with the apostle. Three things are certain. First, they were disciples of John the Baptist, having undergone his baptism. Second, they did not know anything about the Holy Spirit. Third, their water baptism "in the name of the Lord Jesus" convinced Paul to take the next step, recorded for us in Acts 19:6 –

**"And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking with tongues and prophesying."**

Why? Why would Paul take this additional step with these converts to Christ when he did not do so with the Philippian jailor and his family? This question needs an answer, especially in light of current Pentecostal/Charismatic practice. Acts 19:1-7 has clearly become the standard operating procedure in their circle of influence. I speak from personal experience, as an eyewitness in a church service, where the Ephesian disciples were portrayed as Christians who had not received the second blessing of the Holy Spirit's empowerment. The exposition of the passage was then followed by an invitation to come forward and experience the baptism of the Holy Spirit just as the individuals in Acts 19. Should Acts 19:1-7 be the norm for today? There exists evidence to the contrary which supports the perspective that what occurred in Ephesus, marked the completed fulfillment of the prophetic promise of John the Baptist, and the cessation of this practice.

After Acts 19:1-7, there is no further mention in the book of Acts of anyone experiencing the baptism of the Holy Spirit, as it occurred in Acts 2:4, 8:14-18; 10:44-48, or 19:6. Instead, Paul affirms the following in 1 Corinthians 12:13, in connection with 12:30, where we read this –

**"For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. . . All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they?"**

Paul wrote his first letter to the church at Corinth during his lengthy stay in Ephesus (Acts 19:8-10; circa A.D. 54-55). His point of emphasis in 12:13 is that the baptism of Holy Spirit would now become a non-experiential event, received by all believers at the moment of conversion; without the need for seeking it, and without the manifestation of speaking in tongues (confirmed in 1 Corinthians 12:30 by the fact that not all spoke in tongues, even in Corinth). These verses indicate the beginning of a transition taking place, out from the foundational phase and into the structural phase of the building of Christ's Church. This also explains Paul's reference to "one baptism" in Ephesians 4:5; to be PRACTICED in the church among believers, by means of immersion in water.