

Victoria Fellowship Church
International & Interdenominational
Bible Study Worksheet – March 8, 2020

Theme: The Acts of the Apostles **Topic:** The Holy Spirit at work

Main Text: Acts 19:1-20

Key verse: Acts 19:20 – ‘So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed’ (NKJV)

INTRODUCTION: After his brief stop in Ephesus at the tail end of his second missionary journey, Paul now heads directly to Ephesus. And it made sense that he should return to this capital city of Asia which was a major population and centre of commerce. As with Corinth, he could reach many people there with the gospel of Jesus Christ. His first recorded ministry encounter upon his return was meeting those twelve disciples. And for whatever reason, asked if they received the Holy Spirit when they believed.

1. **(a) Why was it important for these disciples to receive the Holy Spirit? See Acts 2:38, Romans 8:9, 11 (b) The twelve responded that they didn’t even know that there was a Holy Spirit. How do you think this might have affected their ‘Christian’ lives? E.g. John 16:13-15 (c) How do we ensure that those we lead to Christ or those we are discipling don’t end up in such ignorance as these twelve?**

We don’t know what prompted Paul to ask those disciples such a question. But we can see the difference it made to them. *‘Then Paul said, “John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.” When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.’* (Acts 19:4-6 NKJV). Before the encounter with Paul, it could be said that they had not yet believed in Christ; no wonder they didn’t know of the Holy Spirit and haven’t experienced His indwelling.

2. **(a) What do participants understand by the ‘the baptism of John? See Acts 19:4 (b) Let participants read Matthew 3:11; Luke 3:3-6; and share what they believe is the difference between the baptism of John and baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus (c) What would be a present day ‘Christian’ who only has the baptism of John?**

Ephesus was a predominantly pagan city. The most important temple to the goddess Artemis was in Ephesus. So, magic, sorcery and superstition permeated Ephesian culture to the extent that a prosperous and profitable trade developed around it (Acts 19:24-47). So, for the gospel to penetrate a city deep rooted in idolatry, God had to do *‘extraordinary miracles through Paul, so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured, and the evil spirits left them.’* (Acts 19:11-12 NIV). Funnily, some professional magicians thought the power of God could be imitated. Meanwhile, the miracles of God made a great impact on people resulting in the spread of the gospel.

3. **(a) Let participants share possible lessons from the incident with the seven sons of Sceva (Acts 19:13-16) (b) Acts 19:11-12 says ‘God did extraordinary miracles through Paul. How then should we interpret and respond to the numerous invitations to miracle crusades? (c) When we consider the impact of the miracles God did through Paul here and elsewhere in Acts of the Apostles, what conclusions do we reach concerning the administration of miracles and their purpose?**

Prayer: Father, thank You for Your Holy Spirit who empowers me to live for You. May Your Holy Spirit continue to work in me and through me to the glory of Your Name. Amen.