

Acts 19:1-11 World English Bible

"The Apostle who taught at a tyrant's school"

"While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul, having passed through the upper country, came to Ephesus and found certain disciples. ² He said to them, 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?' They said to him, 'No, we haven't even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.' ³ He said, 'Into what then were you baptized?' They said, 'Into John's baptism.'

"⁴ Paul said, 'John indeed baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe in the one who would come after him, that is, in Jesus.' ⁵ When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶ When Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them and they spoke with *other* (the original has no modifier here) languages and prophesied. ⁷ They were about twelve men in all. ⁸ He entered into the synagogue and spoke boldly for a period of three months, reasoning and persuading about the things concerning God's Kingdom.

"⁹ But when some were hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. ¹⁰ This continued for two years, so that all

those who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. ¹¹ God worked special miracles by the hands of Paul.

Do you worry about the future?

Only one being in the Universe knows and controls our future.



God alone possesses that intelligence and power.

After He sent several messengers, God visited our planet.

His plan took place exactly as He announced.

Years ago I attended a business luncheon in a certain city and sat near a pugnacious man.

In gruesome details, he boasted how he had knocked a fellow unconscious.

That muscular, belligerent man proudly thought himself master of all situations.

In that city, a few days later, this contentious man died in a disastrous downtown hotel fire.

He clearly didn't confer with God about his future.

Acts 19 helps us ready to meet God.

Misinformation surrounds those Acts 19 events; let's check its details.

The following photo shows underground plumbing and surface remains of **Ephesus**, one the first century's greatest cities; site of events in Acts 19 (located in SW Turkey).



Blair photo

- In Ephesus, Paul met disciples of John the Baptist.

Paul - "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"

Disciples - "No, we haven't even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."

Literally, "Holy Spirit? What is that?"

Paul - "Into what then were you baptized?"

Disciples - "Into John's baptism."

Paul - "John . . . baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying . . . they should believe in the one who would come after him, that is, in Jesus."

"When they heard this, they (the disciples) were baptized in the name of the **Lord Jesus.**"

Why was the first baptism of these men invalid?

Acts 19 shows the importance of two factors:

First, it matters into what we are baptized:

As we saw last week, John the Baptist knew Jesus fulfilled many *Old Testament* prophecies.

But because John died before Jesus was crucified, he did not know all that Jesus accomplished.

Jesus fulfilled God's plan by resisting Satan and he came back from the grave; thus God made him **Lord and Christ** (See Acts 2:36 in sidebar 1).

The 12 Ephesus men likely became disciples of John after Jesus' resurrection, and Pentecost.

They didn't know Jesus as Lord of the Universe; that's why they were baptized again.

Second, many church leaders seem to neglect a significant fact about baptism into Christ.

Remember what Paul asked those men: "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"

Valid baptism requires belief.

Paul wrote this to the church in Ephesus:

"You also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance. . ."¹

When they heard and when they believed, they received the Holy Spirit, God's redemption seal.

¹ Ephesians 1:13, 14 NIV

Babies are incapable of hearing with understanding; they are also too young to believe.

Note Acts 2:38, 39 in Sidebar 1 (next page): God forgives us when we repent of our sins, believe, and are baptized into our Lord and Savior Jesus.

That's when God gives us His Holy Spirit seal. Do you recall what John's Gospel says about belonging to God's Kingdom? (John 1:12, 13 NIV)

"To all who received Him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God."

Perhaps your parents decided that you should be baptized as an infant.

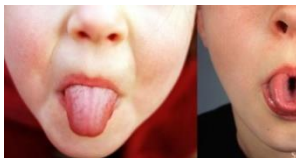
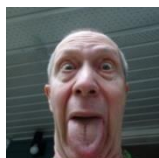
If so, that was a decision *of the flesh*, of human *will*.

You didn't hear or believe the Word.

Regardless of his/her title, no church official or group of officials has a right to alter God's Word.

One receives power to become God's child when he/she hears and believes Jesus Christ, and upon repentance, is born in him of water and the Spirit.

- **The next batch of misinformation relates to tongue speaking:**



"When Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them (the 12) and they spoke with other languages and prophesied."

Some translations read: "they spoke in tongues."

What does it mean to "speak in tongues"?

Lord Byron wrote in his work *Don Juan*:

"I wish he would explain his explanation."

Explanations of tongue speaking have come by the truckloads.

The phenomenon confused early Christians.

Controversy caused Paul to write the famous love chapter, 1 Corinthians 13.

Glōssa is the Greek word for tongue.

Glōssa can refer to that tongue in your mouth, a language, or an utterance.

Tongue speaking took place on Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came as promised on Jesus' disciples (see Acts 2:1-11 in Sidebar # 2).

What was the *tongue* miracle on Pentecost?

Jews from all over the world came to Jerusalem for the celebration.

Most spoke the language of the country where they lived; they no longer spoke Hebrew.

The disciples likely spoke Aramaic, which was the language most of Israel spoke then.

The disciples spoke with a northern Galilean accent.

After the Holy Spirit came over them, the disciples began telling about Jesus (Sidebar 2).

Notice what those from foreign lands said:

In 2:11, “We hear them telling the mighty works of God in our own native languages (*Glōssa plural*).”

In Acts 2: 6 the Greek word is *dialect*.

Whether in tongues or languages, the hearers understood plainly in their own native languages.

They heard words-language about the mighty Creator’s glorious power.

On Pentecost, tongues were not gibberish or unintelligible speech.

The disciples boldly spoke about God and the wondrous things he accomplished in Christ.

Isaiah prophesied about this 700 plus years earlier: Isaiah 66:18-The Lord will

“come and gather all nations and tongues (*glōssa* in the Greek Old Testament) and they will come and see my glory.” NIV

Pentecost reversed the confusion God caused during the Tower of Babel debacle (See Sidebar 2).

Instead of emphasizing form or style, we should concentrate on content—praise God in Christ.

Side Bar 1 Acts 2:22-39 NIV Peter on Pentecost.

- “Listen (ἀκούσατε - second person imperative) . . . :
- Jesus of Nazareth was. . . accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. . .
- You, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.
- ²⁴ But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.’
- ²⁵ “David said about him (Christ): ²⁶ ‘Therefore **my heart is glad and my tongue (γλῶσσά μου) rejoices (ἀγαλλιάω); my body also will rest in hope**, ²⁷ because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead . . . ’ “I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried . . . ³⁰ But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. ³¹ . . . he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah (Christ), that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay.
- ³² God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. ³³ Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear . . .
- ³⁶ “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah (Christ).”
- ³⁷ When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles,
“Brothers, what shall we do?”

^{38, 39} Peter replied,

“Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness for the forgiveness of your sins.

And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

In the above, can you find all the points of the Gospel?

An entirely different phenomenon later occurred in Corinth (see 1 Corinthians 12-14).

Nobody could understand that tongue speaking.
Paul instructed the church not to practice that tongue speaking in worship services unless someone present could understand and interpret the speech.

That type of tongue speaking occurred only in Corinth. No other *New Testament* book mentions it. The Lord willing, we'll discuss reasons for that soon.



- **One final point today concerns Paul teaching at a tyrant's school.**
A few times in Acts, Luke relates an almost humorous irony in the way God resolves difficult situations for His servants.
Enemies hounded Paul to nearly every city.
Much of his opposition came from Jewish leaders of the type who were envious of Jesus.
They resented those who taught in their synagogues that Jesus was the Messiah.

As had the 12 Ephesus disciples, many came to believe that Jesus was the Christ.

Acts tells about the resistance that grew in the local synagogue and what Paul did about it.

Side Bar 2 Acts 2:1-11 WEB Pentecost.

“Now when the day of Pentecost had come, they were all with one accord in one place. ² Suddenly there came from the sky a sound like the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

³ Tongues (glossai) like fire appeared and were distributed to them, and one sat on each of them. ⁴ They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other languages (glossais), as the Spirit gave them the ability to speak. ⁵ Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under the sky.

⁶ When this sound was heard, the multitude came together and were bewildered, because everyone heard them speaking in his own language (dialecto).

⁷ They were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, “Behold, aren't all these who speak Galileans? ⁸ How do we hear, everyone in our own native language (dialecto)? ⁹ Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and people from Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, the parts of Libya around Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, ¹¹ Cretans and Arabians: we hear them speaking in our languages (glossais) the mighty works of God!”

What miracle occurred above?

Was this a reversal of Babel?

Genesis 11:7 “Let us confound . . . their tongue (glossan).”

Acts 5:17 “I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh.”

What was the subject of their speaking?

“But when some were hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus.”

As you might guess, Tyrannus and tyrant have similar word origins.

In his Acts commentary footnotes, the scholar F.F. Bruce speculated whether the parents of Tyrannus or his students gave him that name.

Paul apparently rented Ty's school and daily taught during off hours, likely about 11 AM to 4 PM, while most folks took their siestas.

“This continued for two years, so that all those who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. God worked special miracles by the hands of Paul.”

Some of Revelation's seven churches were likely established through Paul's ministry then.

Ephesus is the first church addressed in *Revelation*.

Opposition that overwhelms and intimidates human beings is puny before our Lord and God.

Imagine a godly preacher being expelled by hateful church leaders and members.

The preacher rents space from an atheist group and teaches in their building with this result:

- **Virtually everyone in the area hears the gospel.**

- **Thousands of people turn to Jesus.**

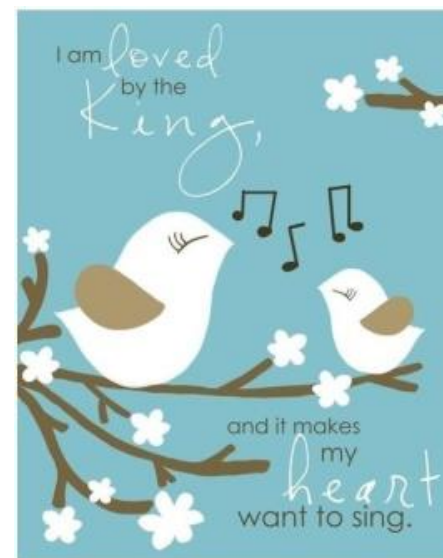
God rewards faithfulness under duress.

In the face of all opposition, He wants us to staunchly, joyfully do His will and praise Him.

The person who was my harshest critic at the Hollywood church later proposed one of the nicest gifts Norma and I ever received.

We thank God for His mercy and grace.

The clout, security, and eternity of God's Word silence and humble us.



Sing God's wondrous love each day!

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