

Midweek Study



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Authentic Faith

Acts 19:1-20:16

Paul arrived in Ephesus to find twelve men calling themselves “disciples,” but something didn’t seem right. Paul’s diagnostic question to them remains the ultimate test for every believer today: **“Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?”** To have authentic faith, we need to distinguish between head knowledge and heart transformation, between religious activity and spiritual reality.

I. THE DANGER OF INCOMPLETE FAITH (19:1-7)

- **V.2** - This is not teaching a second work of grace. You receive the Holy Spirit when you become a Christian (**Romans 8:9**). This was Paul’s test question of whether a person is a Christian.
- They had submitted to John’s baptism of repentance, but they were still anticipating the promised Messiah. Christian baptism signifies the believer’s union with Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection (See **Rom. 6:3-5**).
- When Paul laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them. They spoke with tongues and prophesied. These were signs that they had the Holy Spirit and were saved. **Today, they are not.** Before, they were simply baptized and religious. Now they were true Christians for the first time.

INSTANCES OF MIRACULOUS EVIDENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT			
Passage	Subjects	Observers	Purpose
2:1-4	Jewish believers	Jewish nonbelievers	To authenticate the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy concerning the Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28-32)
8:14-17	Samaritan believers	Jewish believers	To authenticate God’s acceptance of Samaritans as Christians
10:44-47	Gentile believers	Jewish believers	To authenticate God’s acceptance of Gentiles as Christians
19:1-7	Jewish disciples of John the Baptist	Jewish believers	To authenticate the gospel among the Jews in Ephesus

Source: Charles Swindoll, *Insights in Acts commentary*

II. THE DEMONSTRATION OF AUTHENTIC MINISTRY (19:8-12)

- **19:8-10** - Paul reasoned in the synagogue for three months, then taught in the school (“lecture hall”) of Tyrannus for two years. His ministry reached both Jews and Greeks.

- **19:11-12** – “Luke [shows] that God accomplished similar things through Peter and Paul. Both healed a disabled man (3:2-12; 14:8-18), cast out demons (5:16; 16:16-18), confronted magicians (8:18-24; 13:6-11), raised the dead (9:36-40; 20:9-10), and were dramatically and miraculously released from prison (12:7-10; 16:25-26).”¹

III. THE DECEPTION OF COUNTERFEIT SPIRITUALITY (19:13-20)

- **19:13-16** - Seven sons tried to use Jesus' name as a magical formula without having any relationship with Jesus. Spiritual authority comes from a genuine relationship with Christ, not religious rituals or using the right words.
- **19:17-20** - When genuine conversion occurs, there will be visible and even expensive evidence. **Deut. 18:9-13** condemns sorcery. These new believers didn't just hide their magic books; they publicly burned them despite their enormous value. This demonstrates the power of genuine repentance and complete break with the old life.
- “The measure of this turn from the occult was a bonfire worth ‘fifty thousand pieces of silver’ (19:19). If the pieces of silver were *drachmas*, each coin represented one day’s wages for a common laborer (cf. **Luke 15:8**). Fifty thousand pieces represented more than **136 years of continuous labor** with no days off! For a conservative estimate of the value today, use this formula: $50,000 \text{ days} \times 8 \text{ hours/day} = 400,000 \text{ work hours.}$ ²

My EXAMPLE: $400,000 \text{ hours} \times \$20 \text{ per/hour} = \$8,000,000!!!$

IV. THE DIFFICULTY OF AUTHENTIC MINISTRY (19:21-41)

- **19:23-24** - Paul’s effective ministry threatened the economic interests of those who profited from religious deception, leading to the riot instigated by Demetrius the silversmith whose Diana idol business was suffering.

V. THE DETERMINATION OF AUTHENTIC FAITH (20:1-16)

- **20:7** - “Now on the first day of the week...” - This is the first mention in the Bible of early Christians meeting on Sunday. Early Christians knew that the resurrection of Jesus Christ changed everything.
- **20:9-12** - When the young man, Eutychus (Greek word indicates between 7-14 years old), fell from the third-story window and died, Paul resurrected him, went back upstairs, and continued preaching until daybreak (likely at least 8-10 hours of preaching). The Word of God was more important than even focusing on this miracle.

Applications for Today:

1. **Do you have the Holy Spirit?** - This is not about a “second blessing” but about whether you have genuinely been saved. Some church members have been immersed in water but never truly born again. (see **2 Cor. 13:5**)
2. **Make sure you are not teaching partial truth** - You can't teach people more than you know. Remember the connection between Apollos and **Ephesians 19:1-6**. **James 3:1** is a strong warning to teachers of God’s Word.
3. **True conversion results in costly life change** - Genuine repentance produces visible, expensive changes in lifestyle, as demonstrated by the Ephesians burning their valuable magic books.
4. **Final question: How are you attacking the work of satan in your life?**

¹ Charles R. Swindoll, *Acts, Swindoll’s Living Insights New Testament Commentary* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2016), 376.

² Ibid., 380.