

Paul's Third Missionary Journey

Acts 18:23

- Paul stayed in Antioch for “some time” (possibly about a year) then traveled to the regions of Galatia and Phrygia and probably revisited the cities of Derbe, Lystra and Iconium.
 - He started on the journey later in the year of 53 A.D.
 - At this point he has written three books of Scripture; 1 & 2 Thessalonians and Galatians all written while he was in Corinth on his first missionary journey.
 - The sign gifts were still being displayed but were fading as Israel was slowly being cast aside (diminishing—see Romans 11:12)

1 Corinthians 13:8—12 ⁸Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. ⁹For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. ¹¹When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. ¹²Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

- This passage indicates that these Spirit gifts will pass away. Many believe that they will fade away when Christ comes at His second coming. The problem with this is verse 10 refers to a thing and not a person. A literal interpretation is: “When the perfect thing comes...”. The word perfect (τελειον) is to be defined as brought to completion, fully accomplished, fully developed, complete, entire (The New Analytical Greek Lexicon, Wesley J. Perschbacher, editor). Using the proper definition helps us realize that Paul is speaking of Scripture and specifically, the revealed truths concerning the Mystery. Paul is stating that when the Mystery is fully revealed then the things connected with prophesy will be completely done away with. If we were still living in the age of prophesy, it would still be “in part” because God would still be revealing truths to us. However, since God has completed His revelation of the Mystery through Paul, the sign gifts have stopped.
- The above interpretation is further strengthened in verse 12. When Paul wrote we now see in a mirror dimly, he was writing from his perspective. God had not yet revealed the full Mystery and Paul could say it was still hard to see; like looking at an image in a fogged mirror. The complete revelation of the Mystery is likened to seeing someone face to face instead of through an imperfect polished piece of metal often used as a mirror. Remember, when Paul wrote this passage the only other Scripture written concerning the Mystery was 1 & 2 Thessalonians and Galatians. Imagine how foggy our knowledge would be if we knew nothing of the truths contained in Romans, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, etc.

Acts 18:24—28 Apollos

- While Paul is strengthening the churches in Galatia and Phrygia Apollos (from Egypt) went to Ephesus and was speaking boldly in the synagogue.
 - He was a very learned man with a thorough knowledge of Scripture and a powerful speaker.
 - He taught about Jesus accurately but was only familiar with the baptism of John.
 - This concerned only the Gospel of the Kingdom for it was beginning with John that the Gospel of the Kingdom was proclaimed (see John 1:31).
- Priscilla and Aquila, who stayed in Ephesus from Paul's second missionary journey, heard Apollos preach. They knew he hadn't heard Paul's teachings and took him aside privately and explained to him the way of God more accurately compared to what he was teaching.
 - Notice that what Apollos was teaching about the Kingdom was absolutely accurate yet he needed to be updated. This kingdom teaching continued on with Peter in early Acts with the

same call to repentance and baptism as John. However, it's obvious that Paul was teaching something that went beyond Kingdom doctrine. Many say that there is only one Gospel and any revelation to Paul was also given to the other Apostles. Revelation given to Paul would be characterized as further revelation and not a new Gospel. This sounds logical until you read what Paul says about making changes to the Gospel in Galatians 1:6—9. If anyone preaches a gospel different than the one taught by the Apostle Paul he is to be accursed. If the Gospel Paul preached can not be changed then how can Paul take the Gospel of the Kingdom, make some changes to it (adding Christ's death, burial and resurrection and changing an earthly Millennial Kingdom for a heavenly hope, etc.) then say his Gospel is unalterable? In other words, in light of what Paul wrote in Galatians, the Gospel of the Kingdom could not be morphed into the Gospel of the Grace of God. They were two unalterable Gospels for two distinct dispensations one the prophetic program relating to Israel and her rise, the other the Mystery relating to God's dealing with the Gentiles through Israel's fall.

- After learning about the Pauline Gospel, Apollos traveled to Achaia (Corinth) with the encouragement of the brothers.

Acts 18:28 for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, demonstrating by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.

Acts 19:1—7 The disciples in Ephesus

- While Apollos was taught further by Aquila and Priscilla, Paul was traveling through the upper country (Galatia and Phrygia). By the time Paul worked his way to Ephesus, Apollos had sailed away to the Achaia region.
- Paul found some disciples—believers who were familiar with the baptism of John but nothing beyond that. They seem to have been as advanced as Apollos was before he met Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:25).
- A cursory reading of this passage seems to indicate these believers knew about the baptism of John but did not know anything about the Holy Spirit. It was then that Paul water baptized them and gave them the gift of the Holy Spirit.

- A literal translation will help us determine the intended meaning.

Acts 19:2—5 ²He said to them, "Believing, did you receive [the gift that comes from the] Holy Spirit?" And they said to him, "We did not even hear whether [the gift that comes from the] Holy Spirit is [given]." ³And he said to them, "Then to what were you baptized?" And they said, "To the baptism of John." ⁴And Paul said, "John indeed baptized a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe into the [One] coming after him; that is, into the Christ, Jesus. ⁵And [upon] hearing they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.

- It seems the when Scripture uses "the" in front of Holy Spirit (το Πνευμα το Αγιοι OR τον Πνευμα τον Αγιοι) that the reference is to the person of the Holy Spirit. When Holy Spirit is used without "the" in front (Πνευμα Αγιοι), the reference is to the gifts that come from the Holy Spirit.

Luke 2:25—26 ²⁵And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the [gift of the] Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶And it had been revealed to him by the [person of the] Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

Luke 4:1 Jesus, full of the [gift of the] Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the [person of the] Spirit in the wilderness

John 1:33 "I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the [person of the] Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the [gift of the] Holy Spirit.'

- These disciples of John seemed to know his teachings and would therefore know about the promise of the Holy Spirit. They would also be very aware of a Holy Spirit throughout the Old Testament Scriptures where the Holy Spirit or His work is mentioned many times. The first mention is in Genesis and the last in Zechariah.

John 1:33 I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.'

Genesis 1:2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

Zechariah 7:12 They made their hearts as hard as flint and would not listen to the law or to the words that the LORD Almighty had sent by his Spirit through the earlier prophets. So the LORD Almighty was very angry.

- Paul did not rebaptize these believers. Verse 5 should be seen as a continuation of the narrative of verse 4. They were baptized at the time they believed which would line up with the teachings of John. A true believer in John's ministry would certainly have been water baptized.
 - Another indication the baptism occurred when they believed is in the tense of the verb "baptized". It is an aorist tense meaning the action had already been accomplished at some previous point in time.
- Paul laid his hand on them and they received the [gift of the] Holy Spirit. Sign gifts were still in effect and they were still primarily a testimony to Israel. These sign gifts will not completely fade away until God is finished with Israel. This would occur no earlier than Paul's second letter to Timothy (68 A.D.) and no later than the destruction of the Temple (70 A.D.).

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