

SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 11



THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT AT EPHESUS

Scripture Text: Acts 18:24-28; Acts 19:1-12

After Paul left Ephesus and was traveling among the churches, Brother Apollos came to Ephesus. He knew only the baptism of John. Priscilla and Aquila taught him the way of the Lord. When returning to Ephesus, Paul found the Ephesians had not heard of the Holy Spirit. He taught that Jesus promised more than repentance. Twelve men were baptized and Spirit filled. Paul taught the Word of the Lord, and God did special miracles. The disciples worked in harmony with the common purpose of

bringing people to the Lord.

Ephesus, about which we study today, was a center of superstition, magic, and satanic arts in the Roman Empire. This week we find Paul in Ephesus striving to lead people out of the darkness of superstition into the light of Christ's Gospel.

MEMORY VERSE: *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.*

—Ephesians 6:10

DAILY READINGS:

Mon.—**John 14:15-24** The promise of the Spirit.

Tue.—**John 14:25-31** The promise of peace.

Wed.—**John 15:1-17** Branches depend fully on the vine.

Thu.—**Ezekiel 36:22-32** God to regather Israel.

Fri.—**John 6:35-51** Close working of the Father and Son.

Devotional Reading: Romans 6:1-14 Believers, dead to sin.

Apollos Learns More

Acts 18:24-28 Apollos was a talented, eloquent man, **and mighty in the scriptures . . . instructed in the way of the Lord . . . fervent in the spirit** and diligent. Yet his teaching fell short because he knew **only the baptism of John**. He could go no further in his teaching. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him preaching in the synagogue, they saw a lack in Apollos. They took him privately and **expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly**. They opened to him the way of God further than the baptism of John. They taught him of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The power of the Holy Spirit in one's heart is the greatest power in the world. Apollos left for Achaia with a letter of commendation from the disciples. There he helped the believers, teaching them his newfound Truth. He effectively taught them that Jesus is the Christ.

John the Baptist was the forerunner of Jesus (**Matthew 3; Mark 1; Luke 3**). He preached, **Repent ye**. John said, **I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance**. To have one's sins forgiven requires the blood of Jesus. All of us must have it. This was not enough. John kept pointing ahead to something greater. **The kingdom of heaven is at hand . . . One mightier than I cometh . . . He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost**.

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Baptized in the Name of Jesus

Acts 19:1-7 Then Paul, interested in the progress of the disciples, asked, **Have ye received the Holy Ghost?** No, they had not even heard of Him. Apollos had not told them of the Holy Ghost. Paul asked, **Unto what then were ye baptized?** Baptism has meaning. What did theirs mean? They were baptized **unto John's baptism**. Apollos had taught them as far as he knew, but it was not deep enough.

Paul explained that **John . . . baptized with the baptism of repentance**, but that he pointed ahead to more than that, to belief in Christ Jesus. The people believed and accepted Paul's teaching. **They were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus**. They opened their hearts and received the power that only the Holy Spirit gives. **The Holy Ghost came on them**. God thus witnesses His approval. Immediately the Holy Spirit in the twelve men was active. He helped them to speak **with tongues** and to prophesy—give messages from God with unlearned languages.

Then Jesus came (**Mark 1:14-15**). He came **preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God**. He said, **The time is fulfilled**. The kingdom is the rule of God within hearts (**Luke 17:21**). Jesus still preached, **Repent ye**, but He added, **and believe the gospel**—the good news that God would live in man. Jesus said, **If a man love me . . . we will come unto him, and make our abode with him** (**John 14:23**). They (plural) came in the Person of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, **I will send him unto you** (**John 16:7**). When this is done, the Kingdom of God is set up in that heart.

The Two Baptisms Compared

John preached **the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins**. Later Paul wrote (**Romans 6:3-11**) of (1) being **baptized into Jesus Christ**, which is far better. (2) Being **baptized into his death**, death to sin, separation from sin, and (3) being raised up **in the likeness of his resurrection . . . alive unto God through Jesus Christ**. Jesus' baptism includes John's. John's baptism signifies repentance. Jesus' baptism signifies this and also the filling with the Holy Spirit.

These twelve disciples were devout men. They had made public repentance of their sin. They had been baptized according to the teaching of John the Baptist. Still, there was something lacking in their lives. They did not have joy, hope, and power—the things which faith in Christ brings to one's experience. They had received the baptism by water, but not the baptism by the Spirit. Paul's message was **repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ** (**Acts 20:21**).

Special Miracles

Acts 19:8-12 For three months Paul reasoned in the synagogue **concerning the kingdom of God**. But when some **were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them**. He separated the disciples from the unbelievers. To reject Truth has a hardening effect upon the soul, and unbelief locks out the way of light into the life.

Here we have described a fruitful ministry and a mighty spiritual conflict. Paul reasoned and persuaded. The battle he confronted was that of ignorance and superstition, principalities and powers—agents promising help to men but instead destroying their souls. There are angels of light, and there are angels of darkness. God uses heavenly messengers; Satan uses demons. Paul continued for two years to preach until **all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word**.

God worked in unusual power through Paul at this time. Handkerchiefs and aprons he had touched were carried to the sick and **the diseases departed from them**. They were carried to the demon possessed, and **the evil spirits went out of them**.

Paul found a city in bondage to Satan. Paul's work was to transfer the allegiance of these people from Satan to Christ, from darkness to light, from reliance upon superstition to abiding faith in the Truth of the Gospel.