

We know that in order for Demas to be a fellowlabourer with Paul, Demas would of had to have put Jesus first in his life. However later in life Paul wrote unto Timothy this concerning Demas in 2 TIMOTHY 4:10: *...Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world...* Demas had traded his preeminent love for Jesus by putting a love for this present world first. It is to those of a heart attitude like Demas that Jesus wrote in REVELATION 2:4 *Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.* Again at one time Demas had shown his first love for Jesus in his ministering with the Apostle Paul.

Recently I talked to a man in Houston who told me that every day when he wakes up he asks God to help him have that wonderful feeling of Jesus being so close in his life. As we talked I realized that Jesus was the preeminent love in his life; the first love whom the Ephesians had left. May we all learn from the church at Ephesus and keep Jesus first in our lives. May He be our preeminent love. Jesus will be the first love of all full overcomers.

Paul at Ephesus

Having now a complete overview of what took place in Ephesus, let's go back and see how this assembly was established.

Recall from ACTS 18 that Paul had already briefly visited Ephesus when accompanying Aquila and Priscilla on their move to Ephesus. ACTS 18:19 indicates that Paul was in Ephesus long enough to attend at least one Sabbath's day service, where we are told he reasoned with the Jews. Of course we know this was Paul's custom everywhere he went. However these Jews of Ephesus were a little more receptive to hearing what the Apostle Paul had to say, thus in ACTS 18:20 we find that *...they desired him to tarry longer time with them.* We haven't read of the Apostle Paul getting this kind of reception anywhere else he has traveled to since leaving his home church in Antioch, Syria. The Apostle Paul wasn't able to stay longer with them at this time so Paul makes them a promise in ACTS 18:21 stating: *...I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus.* Several months pass, and we find here in ACTS 19 that the Apostle Paul does return to Ephesus.

ACTS 19:1 *And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, 2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. 3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. 4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. 5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. 7 And all the men were about twelve.*

What an important portion of scripture these first seven verses of ACTS 19 have become in understanding some fundamental New Testament truths. Yet the doctrines found here in are often twisted, or at least misunderstood by an innumerable multitude! Let's make sure we understand what is being said here.

As we go through these seven verses we find a mini New Testament. A snap shot (if you will) of Paul's gospel, and a snap shot of New Testament truths. Hopefully this will be evident as we go through this portion of scripture.

The Doctrine of Eternal Security

In verse 1 we find the Apostle Paul finding certain unnamed disciples upon his arrival at Ephesus. "Ephesus" is found seventeen times in scripture, and seventeen is the number that has to do with VICTORY IN CHRIST JESUS. Simply put, all full overcomers have VICTORY IN CHRIST JESUS, and those of "Ephesus" lead the way in this regard. This is even true in these first unnamed disciples that Paul found first here at Ephesus. They could have been well set in their ways, and not able to take instruction,

and a victory in their own lives, but they proved to be just the opposite of this kind of mind set.

Luke notes in verse 7 that these certain unnamed disciples numbered about twelve men. Were there others with these twelve or so men, like their children and wives perhaps, thus making an exact count harder to come by? We are not told this information in scripture either. By the time Luke records this information in scripture the exact count of disciples in verse 7 is not remembered, thus we find there mentioned: *And all the men were about twelve.* So we don't know their names, nor do we know exactly how many there really were. We are not told this information in scripture, because it is not important for us to know this information. What is important for each of us to know is Jesus Christ, and the Apostle Paul was making sure each of these unnamed disciples knew Jesus Christ. But they were disciples, so they knew some things about Jesus Christ, however like Apollos before he met Aquila and Priscilla, they were not up to date concerning Jesus. Perhaps these unnamed disciples were introduced to the Lord through Apollos prior to his meeting Aquila and Priscilla, for they had heard nothing of the Holy Ghost, knowing only John's baptism. Perhaps even some of these very same unnamed disciples were introduced to the Lord through the ministry of John the Baptist some twenty five years earlier when he preached in the wilderness of Judaea. However, again, we are not told any of this information, yet when the Apostle Paul met this group of disciples, he knew that they were believers. There was no question as to their eternal salvation. Once you are born again, you are forever born again, just like when you were born, you were forever born, and can not become unborn. In other words once you are saved, you are forever saved, and the Bible never teaches anything different.

(The following is copied from an old article written some time ago. The scripture texts are added for easy reference.) "A man serving in the Royal Navy wrote to the Soldier's and Airmen's Scripture Readers Association to ask about eternal security of the believer. He received this answer:

Five things must happen before a saved soul can be lost:

1. Someone has to pluck us out of the hand of God Himself. JOHN 10:29 *My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.*
2. Someone has to break the seal of ownership which made us God's purchased possession. EPHESIANS 1:13 & 14. *In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, 14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.*
3. Someone has to cast out the indwelling Spirit of God. 1 CORINTHIANS 3:16 *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?*
4. Someone has to separate us from the love of Christ. ROMANS 8:31-39 *What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? 32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
5. Someone has to get up into Heaven and erase the believer's name from the Lamb's Book of Life. LUKE 10:20 *Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.* PHILIPPIANS 4:3 *And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me*

in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life. REVELATION 20:15 *And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.* REVELATION 21:27 *And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.*”

Now back to our text of ACTS 19:1-7. We have noted in verses 1 and 7 that the Apostle Paul upon his arrival at Ephesus found certain believers, called in verse 1 disciples, and have noted that there never was any question as to their salvation. It is with this group of unnamed disciples that the Apostle Paul begins his ministry in Ephesus, thus laying the foundation upon which the church of Ephesus was founded, with Jesus Christ being the chief corner stone, {EPHESIANS 2:20}.

The Doctrine of the Holy Ghost

In verse 2 Paul asks these unnamed disciples *“Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?”* This particular portion of scripture has caused much discussion over the centuries. Pastor Cyrus Ingerson Scofield (August 19, 1843-July 24, 1921), whose reference Bible many of us study, didn't understand this portion of scripture either, as evidenced by his study notes. The original Greek of *“Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?”* reads: *“The Holy Ghost, have you received Him, having believed?”* This is a good question to ask all believers. *“The Holy Ghost, have you received Him, having believed?”* Notice here that the Apostle Paul had no doubt concerning these disciples salvation, (as we have noted above), but rather there was a question in his mind about their having received the Holy Ghost, also known as The Comforter, The Spirit of Truth, The Holy Spirit; the One whom Jesus noted in JOHN 16:13 that *...will guide you into all truth;* the One whom Jesus noted in JOHN 14:26 that *...shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.* If all believers received the Holy Ghost when they believed, then why would an educated man like the Apostle Paul ask such a question as: *“The Holy Ghost, have you received Him, having believed?”* Brother Copley writes that *“Paul knew that people did not receive Christ and the Spirit by one act of faith, as many today claim. Otherwise, his question would have been impertinent. Hence, the authorized version expresses the Apostle's meaning exactly -- “Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?” That those twelve had believed on Jesus unto salvation, there can be no doubt. Their answer, therefore, proves that they had not yet received the Spirit. They said, nay ...We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.”* (End of quote from Brother Copley).

Why did the Holy Ghost inspire Luke to write what he did in ACTS 19:1-7? To emphasize some fundamental New Testament doctrines that has already been taught here in the book of ACTS. One of these New Testament doctrines that is being emphasized here is the doctrinal fact that receiving the Holy Ghost is a separate event which takes place in some believers, (not all), after believing upon Jesus as their own personal Savior. We will cover several examples of this in the following paragraphs, but before we get to these other examples, let's first recall how it was that the Apostle Paul became a believer and received the Holy Ghost himself, and thus better appreciate why he asked these dozen or so Ephesian believers *“Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?”* {ACTS 19:2}.

Recall in ACTS 9 verses 1 through 6 that the Apostle Paul got saved when he believed it truly was Jesus who appeared unto him as a bright Light greater than the noon day sun while he traveled on the road to Damascus. Paul's words of confession were: *“Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?”* {ACTS 9:6}. Part of the instructions that the Lord Jesus gave Paul on that day were to go into Damascus and wait for further instructions. These further instructions were given by the Lord to Ananias of Damascus, who in ACTS 9:17 came unto Paul and said: *...Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.* Now let me ask this question: was the Apostle Paul filled with the Holy Ghost when he believed on the road to Damascus, or