

## **“Getting To Know the Holy Spirit”**

*Acts 19<sup>1-7</sup>*

It ought to be obvious that the spiritual life is dependent upon the life and work of the Holy Spirit. Yet many people who call themselves “spiritual” have an impoverished understanding and experience of the Spirit. They do not realize the incredibly rich role he has played, and longs to play, in the world and in the lives of ordinary people. Indeed, the Holy Spirit is the person of the Trinity through whom God carries out his work in us and through us. Deepening our understanding and experience of the Holy Spirit has the power to change our world.

### **Introductory Question**

**Q** – If a friend or neighbour from a different religious background (or non-religious background) heard someone mention “the Holy Spirit” and asked you, “what is the Holy Spirit” what would you say?

### **Discussion Questions**

- 1) **Read Acts 19:1-7.** Why do you think Paul went to Ephesus on his next trip (see 18<sup>19-21</sup>)?
- 2) Apollos was from Egypt (18<sup>24-25</sup>), and these disciples were nearly 1300 kms from Jerusalem. What does the fact that they were also followers of John the Baptist tell you about his influence?
- 3) **Read John 1<sup>19-34</sup>** for a summary of John’s message. How would these disciples awareness of John and his message be good preparation for them to hear about Jesus and the Holy Spirit?
- 4) Since Paul had to teach these “disciples” about Jesus, they apparently had not heard about him or the Holy Spirit. What does Paul say to help fill in the gaps (v.4)? What would you have said (or added)?
- 5) From Acts 2<sup>38</sup>; 10<sup>43-44</sup> and this passage, what do we learn about the relationship between faith in Jesus and receiving the Holy Spirit? Why were they baptized “into the name of the Lord Jesus” (v.5)?
- 6) What happened in vv.6-7 has become a proof text in some Pentecostal and charismatic circles for a two-stage understanding of Christian initiation (i.e. water baptism followed later by a later “baptism” or “receiving” of the Holy Spirit). Do you think Luke includes this story because it was normative or because it was unique, and why?
- 7) If this story is unique, why do you think “they spoke in tongues and prophesied” when “the Holy Spirit came on them”? How does their experience compare or contrast to what happened to the believers at Pentecost (Acts 2<sup>1-6</sup>)?
- 8) Based on this story (and Paul’s statement in Romans 8:9—read it), when do you think this group of twelve in Ephesus became Christians?
- 9) If a seeker (or new believer) asked you, “How can I know if (or when) I have the Holy Spirit?” how would you respond?
- 10) What new or fresh insight about the person and work of the Holy Spirit have you received today?