

"THE SPIRIT OF SALVATION"
(Acts 18:23-19:7)
(Chuck Swindoll)

Apollos and the other incomplete disciples shared one similarity: They knew only about the baptism associated with John the Baptizer's ministry. Before Jesus emerged as the Messiah, John prepared Israel for His arrival while offering a baptism of repentance. Christian baptism builds upon John's, but it symbolizes much more. Christian baptism illustrates the believer's identification with Christ in His death, burial, resurrection (Rom. 6:3-5), new life, and unity with all other believers (1 Cor. 12:13). Neither Apollos nor the incomplete disciples knew about Christian baptism.

Beyond this similarity, however, Apollos and the incomplete disciples exhibit some helpful contrasts.

- Apollos had heard about Jesus (Acts 18:25); the disciples had not.
- Apollos had undoubtedly heard about Pentecost and the arrival of the Holy Spirit; the disciples had "not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit" (19:2).
- The ministry of Apollos improved, but did not change; the disciples experienced a radical change.

Luke mentions nothing about miraculous evidence of the Holy Spirit in Apollos; the disciples did not hear of the Holy Spirit and then upon belief begin to speak in tongues and prophesy. These important differences highlight four important conclusions.

First, *repentance is not enough without trust in Christ*. Repentance is a necessary beginning, but repentance does not, by itself, save an individual from the eternal consequences of sin. One must believe in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ and accept God's forgiveness as a free gift apart from good deeds.

Second, *the presence of the Holy Spirit indicates genuine belief, or what might be called "saving faith."* Christians receive the Holy Spirit as a gift at the moment of salvation; those who do not have the Spirit are not saved.

Third, *the Holy Spirit may or may not reveal Himself through miraculous abilities*. He will speak in other languages or prophesy through believers at His discretion to meet the needs of the time. Believers have no say in the matter. Miraculous ability is neither learned nor acquired, but solely a work of God.

Fourth, *while miraculous ability validates the presence of the Holy Spirit, we cannot interpret the absence of miracles as the absence of the Spirit*. In the Old and New Testaments, the effects of the Spirit's work in the lives of God's people take a variety of forms. For example, the Spirit's presence results in wisdom, understanding, strength, and fear of God (see Isa. 11:2). And His sanctifying work in the believer yields fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. 5:22-23).

