



# CAPITOL COMMISSION™

## The Necessity of Believing in Jesus Christ

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**Acts 19:1-7** *And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples 2) he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” So they said to him, “We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.” 3) And he said to them, “Into what then were you baptized?” So they said, “Into John’s baptism.” 4) Then Paul said, “John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would 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 hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. 7) Now the men were about twelve in all. (NKJV)*

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“PAUL EXPLAINS TO THEM THE TRUE INTENT AND MEANING OF JOHN’S BAPTISM, AS PRINCIPALLY REFERRING TO JESUS CHRIST, AND SO RECTIFIES THE MISTAKE OF THOSE WHO HAD BAPTIZED THEM INTO THE BAPTISM OF JOHN, AND HAD NOT DIRECTED THEM TO LOOK ANY FARTHER, BUT TO REST IN THAT.”

MATTHEW HENRY

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Is Paul’s path to Ephesus significant? Why did Paul question the disciples? Were these lacking much more than Apollos? Are these disciples true believers? What were they trusting in? Is there a reason why these disciples are baptized again? Why are we told of their Holy Spirit gifting and precise number?

FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDIES:

- FEBRUARY 14: ACTS 19:8-10 **CHRIST’S STRATEGY TO REACH ALL ASIA MINOR THROUGH PAUL**

- FEBRUARY 14: ACTS 19:11-20 **PAUL VERSES THE FAKES IN THE CAPITAL**

Paul had understood the strategic importance of Ephesus as the capital of Asia Minor and on his previous, second missionary journey they had tried but “*were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia*” (Acts 16:6). Instead Luke shows how the Holy Spirit led Paul directly to where he was in Troas and how, through Paul’s vision, God had called him to leave his medical practice, “*concluding the Lord had called us to preach the gospel*” (16:10). Thus, Luke-the author of Acts, joined Paul’s mission team and became the pastor of the first church in Europe, meeting in Lydia’s home in Philippi. Paul had not forgotten about Ephesus, and though he was only able to preach the gospel one Sabbath in the synagogue, he left Aquila and Priscilla there and had promised to return (18:21). The evangelist, Apollos, had understood the strategic importance of this city and had come “*speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus*” (18:25). Apollos was Spirit filled, literally “*being fervent in the Spirit*” and was currently proving “*that Jesus was the Christ*” in Corinth, and likely winning the future leaders, Sosthenes & Erastus, soon found on Paul’s mission team (1 Cor 1:1, Acts 19:22). Luke will again reveal Paul’s direct route to a most strategic city (boasting a theatre seating 25,000), as he again departs from the Galatian churches he had planted on his first missionary journey.

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“EPHESUS, ‘THE PRINCIPLE TRADING CENTER OF ASIA,’ WITH ITS HARBOR AND NETWORK OF ROADS REACHING INTO THE INTERIOR, HAS CAUGHT PAUL’S STRATEGIC EYE. IT WILL SERVE WELL HIS PURPOSES FOR PENETRATING A WHOLE PROVINCE EVANGELISTICALLY.” WILLIAM LARKIN

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### I. DASH & DIAGNOSIS ACTS 19:1-3

We are provided Paul’s precise route to Ephesus “*having passed through the upper regions.*” Thus, Paul avoided all the

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### BIBLE STUDIES

THURSDAY @ 6:30 AM –PRAYER MEETING – GAB 6<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR SPEAKER’S CONFERENCE ROOM

THURSDAY @ 7:00 AM –BIBLE STUDY – GAB 6<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR SPEAKER’S CONFERENCE ROOM

# Virginia

## The Necessity of Believing in Jesus Christ

cities and towns on the major route and took the less traveled, more difficult and direct way. He avoided the trade route through the Lycus and Meander valleys, to arrive more quickly in his promise to return. Upon finding a group of men to disciple, Paul sensed that their foundation in Christianity was missing, so he wisely began to ask diagnostic questions. He must have asked other questions, but especially to the question, “*Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?*”, Paul heard an unusual answer. “*We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.*” Rather than reacting with astonishment or quickly giving them instruction or advice, he lovingly asked his final perceptive question, knowing such could be the case among the early followers of John the Baptist: “*Into what then were you baptized?*” When they responded, “*Into John’s baptism,*” Paul knew that these were disciples of John, and not Jesus Christ. They were trusting their own work of repentance rather than God’s grace by faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ upon the cross for salvation. These had begun well in the first step of repentance and turning from sin, but that is not enough. Morality cannot save anyone, because such is not justice.

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“THEY APARENTLY DID NOT KNOW THAT JESUS WAS THE PROMISED MESSIAH WHOM JOHN PROCLAIMED. SIGNIFICANTLY, PAUL DID NOT INSTRUCT THEM ABOUT HOW TO RECEIVE THE SPIRIT, BUT ABOUT JESUS.”  
JOHN MACARTHUR

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### II. DOCTRINE & DECISION ACTS 19:4-5

Paul knew that their doctrine was incomplete. They had taken that first step in recognizing that they were sinners disobedient to the law of God (Rom 3:10-20) and they had repented of their sin with the baptism of John. But repentance alone does not provide forgiveness any more than a murderer before the court gets to go free because he says he is sorry and he won’t do it anymore. Someone has to pay the penalty for the murder committed. Thus

Paul introduced these men to the one who paid the penalty for our sin upon the cross (Rom 5:8) that we might obtain forgiveness before God (6:23). In fact, not only does God justly forgive sin because Jesus paid the penalty for it personally upon the cross, but He even gives us eternal life in Christ by giving us the perfect righteousness of Jesus (2 Cor 5:21). Paul knew that the only means of salvation is through Jesus Christ (Jn 14:6), so he took them from where they were and introduced them to their only possible Savior when he said, “*John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.*” This belief in Jesus Christ is summarized by Paul in Romans 10:9-13, ending with “*whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.*” This faith in Jesus was the essential doctrine of true freedom from sin and the right decision was made. “*When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.*”

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“EPHESUS WAS TO BE A NEW CENTRE OF THE GENTILE MISSION—THE NEXT IN IMPORTANCE AFTER SYRIAN ANTIOCH—AND THESE TWELVE DISCIPLES WERE TO BE THE NUCLEUS OF THE EPHESIAN CHURCH.” F. F. BRUCE

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### III. DISCIPLESHIP & DYNAMISM ACTS 19:6-7

Luke the M.D. and author of Acts has shown Governor Theophilus the necessity of believing in Jesus Christ through the lives of these twelve disciples of John. Now through the lives of these twelve disciples of John. Now the natural question in the governor’s mind (19:9-10): If Paul is 2 years daily in the Tyrannus school in Ephesus, how was it that “*all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks?*” Paul didn’t go. He was teaching daily in Ephesus. “*When Paul had laid hands on them, they spoke with tongues and prophesied.*” Just as Jesus taught his twelve disciples to “*disciple all the nations,*” beginning with their own, so Paul did with these twelve!

#### Questions to Ponder:

- 1) If God were to ask you, “Why should I let you into My heaven?” What would you say that would satisfy Him?
- 2) Are you trusting your own good works or morality to get you into heaven, or have you trusted in Jesus Christ?
- 3) What is your gifting by the Holy Spirit? Are you using your gifts by the Holy Spirit to further Christ’s Kingdom?