

CHAPTER 4

TONGUES FULFILLED AT EPHESUS

Acts 19

In Ephesus, the Apostle Paul found a group of about twelve Jewish disciples who were totally ignorant of God's new program. They were in the dark concerning the things that God was presently doing in the world. They were unaware of the dispensational change that had taken place following the cross. In fact, they knew nothing of the cross or the empty tomb! They were looking for the One who should come (verse 4), but they were ignorant that He had already come!

They also had no understanding concerning the unique and special ministry of the Spirit of God in this age (verse 2). Their hearts were right, but they lacked essential information. They were familiar with John's ministry, that great prophet who called *a nation* to repentance (verse 4; cf. Matthew 3:2,8) but they did not know that God's new program was to call *nations* to repentance (see Luke 24:47; Acts 17:30).

Consider the question asked in verse 2: "Have you received the Holy Spirit?" The same emphasis was found in Acts 10:44-47. In light of Paul's later teaching in the Epistles (1 Corinthians 12:13, etc.) the question could be restated: "Have you become members of God's unique organism, the Church? Have you been immersed into the body of Christ as a result of Spirit baptism?" The answer was negative and it became obvious that a rebaptism would be necessary. John's baptism of repentance for *a nation* was not sufficient. They needed the baptism which was identified with God's new program of making *Christian* disciples of *all nations* (Matthew 28:19).

Again, here in Acts 19, the emphasis is upon God's new program, the Church, whereby Israel must decrease and the nations (Gentiles) must increase (Romans 11:12). God's choice is no longer a nation, but God's choice is from among all nations (Acts 15:14), so that the living God might have a showcase of His grace (Ephesians 2:7) which He has redeemed by His blood "out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Revelation 5:9—the raptured Church). So tongues again serve to *signal* God's movement from one nation and one tongue to all nations and all tongues.

Very little is said about tongues-speaking in Acts 19. Verse 6 states that the gift of the Spirit was accompanied by the sign-gift of tongues (cf. Acts 10:46). *Prophecy* (the speaking forth of the Word of God—1 Corinthians 14:3) is also mentioned in connection with tongues (verse 6). Again, tongues served no evan-

gelistic purpose. Every indication is that tongues in Acts 19 was essentially the same as tongues in Acts 2 and Acts 10.