

Holy Spirit Baptism

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The New Testament describes only two cases of baptism in the Holy Spirit. The first occurrence involved Jesus' promise to the apostles. Just before His ascension, the Lord told them to remain in Jerusalem where, said He, "...ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence" (Acts 1:4-5, 8; cf. Luke 24:49). He had earlier promised to send the Holy Spirit upon them, empowering them to reveal His will (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13).

Acts 2 begins by telling of the fulfillment of this promise, as the apostles were overwhelmed by the Holy Spirit in a spectacular demonstration of miraculous power (Acts 2:1-12). Note that, contrary to the teaching of many today, this case of Holy Spirit baptism:

- Was administered **only** to the apostles in this case (not the 120 disciples gathered with them in Jerusalem), as the last verse of Acts 1 and the first verse of Acts 2 clearly indicate.
- Was for the **specific purpose** of giving the great power Jesus promised to the apostles **alone**.
- Was **not** related to the apostles' salvation, either as a condition or as a "sign" thereof; they were "already clean" by their obedience to Jesus' teaching (John 15:3).
- Was **not** administered by a man or men, but by Jesus Christ.
- Was **not** commanded by the Lord.

The second occurrence was upon the Gentile, Cornelius, and those gathered with him to hear the apostle Peter preach the Gospel. Luke said, "the Spirit fell on all them that heard the word," causing them to speak in tongues (Acts 10:44, 46). Peter related this incident to Jewish brethren in Jerusalem and identified it with what occurred to them (the apostles) "at the beginning" (i.e., Pentecost) – baptism in the Holy Spirit (11:15-16). This incident was 8-10 years past Pentecost, yet no other case had occurred since then, according to Peter. Note that this case of Holy Spirit baptism:

- Was administered to a very limited group, **not** universally.
- Was for the **specific purpose** of convincing prejudiced Jews that Gentiles were also recipients of salvation, which effect it had (Acts 10:9-35, 45; 11:15-18).
- Was **not** a "sign" that they had been saved, for they still had to be baptized **in water** for remission of sins, nor was it commanded (Acts 10:45-48; cf. 2:38).

The fact that Paul was an apostle in every sense (2 Cor. 11:5; 12:11-12) implies that he was also baptized in the Holy Spirit. These are the only cases of Holy Spirit baptism.

[**Note:** I wrote this article for and it appeared in the *Denton Record-Chronicle*, Denton, TX, April 13, 2007].

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