

Holy Spirit Baptism Q and A

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Consider some common questions about Holy Spirit baptism and their answers from the Bible:

1. Q—“Isn’t Holy Spirit baptism necessary for salvation?”

A—**No**. It was not in either case recorded in the New Testament. The apostles were saved **before** they received Holy Spirit baptism (John 15:3; Acts 2:1–4). Cornelius and his company learned how to be saved **after** “the Holy Spirit fell on” them (10:44–48; 11:15).

2. Q—“How do we know Holy Spirit baptism is not the baptism of the Great Commission (Mat. 28: 19; Mark 16:16)?

A—**The Lord** administered Holy Spirit baptism only to a **very few** (the apostles, Cornelius and company). **Men** are commanded to administer Great Commission baptism to **all mankind**. One resulted in miraculous demonstrations. The other one results in salvation.

3. Q—“How do we know that only the apostles, not the 120 disciples and the multitude, were baptized in the Holy Spirit on Pentecost?”

A—Jesus promised **only** the apostles that they would be baptized in the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem (Acts. 1:2–5, 8). The “they” upon whom the Holy Spirit came (2:1–4) were the “apostles” of chapter 1:26. The recipients of this baptism were “all Galileans” (2:7) (true of the apostles); it is unlikely that this fit the 120 disciples, and it certainly did not describe the multitude (vv. 9–11). When Peter began explaining the amazing events that drew the multitude together, he “stood up with the eleven,” not with the “120 plus the eleven” (v. 14). After Pentecost, none but the apostles worked miracles until the apostles laid their hands on seven disciples (2: 43; 3:1, 7; 5:12; 6:6–8). Those baptized and added to the church on Pentecost continued in “the apostles’ teaching,” not that of the apostles and the 120 (2:38–42).

4. Q—“Isn’t Holy Spirit baptism the ‘gift of the Holy Spirit’ of Acts 2:38?”

A—**No**. As already noted, Holy Spirit baptism was administered to a very few, but the “gift of the Holy Spirit” is as general as remission of sins that follows baptism in water. In the case of Cornelius, Holy Spirit baptism occurred **before** water baptism (10:44–48), but “the gift of the Holy Spirit” in Acts 2:38 is promised **after** water baptism.

5. Q—“Isn’t Holy Spirit baptism an evidence of salvation?”

A—**No**. It was **too early** to be such at Cornelius’s house, before he knew how to be saved (10:44–48; 11:15–16). It was **too late** to be such for the apostles, for they had already been cleansed by obedience to Jesus’ teachings (John 15:13).

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