

Holy
Spirit
Baptism



Holy Spirit Baptism

False Claims

Many false theories have been spun on the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Fanatics have found this a fertile field for their wild theories and a support for their unreasonable claims. Any wretch on earth can lay claim to the baptism of the Holy Spirit and deceive the untaught by quoting passages of scripture addressed to individuals, as though they were applicable to all men.

Joe Smith, Mary Baker Eddy, Judge Rutherford, and in fact every false teacher trying to establish a following has relied upon the claim of direct inspiration, or the baptism of the Holy Spirit, for support. However, we have a sure method of testing all such claims. When any person assures the people that he is divinely guided and then speaks foolishly, or contradicts Bible teachings, the claim is a falsehood either wilfully, or ignorantly stated.

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.” (1 Jno. 4:1)

(2 Jno. 9; 1 John 2:21-24; Titus 1:9-11; 1 Timothy 4:1-3; Matt. 24:11-13, 23, 24.)

How to Approach the Subject

The only way to learn the truth on any question is to examine the testimony honestly and fairly. No one so far as we know questions the fact that the New Testament records a baptism of the Holy Spirit. There are also two unquestionable examples of this occurrence, 1. the apostles in Acts 2; 2. the house of Cornelius in Acts 10. But many conflicting theories hinder our impartial study of the action, subjects and purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We shall carefully consider the action first of all, and then the subjects and design will appear clearly as we consider the two examples.

The Action of Holy Spirit Baptism

Now lets consider what Jesus designated as a baptism in the Holy Spirit in his own words. "And being assembled together with them, he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, said he, ye heard from me: For John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence." (Acts 1:4, 5) From this passage we learn certain important facts: (1) Holy Spirit baptism is a promise, (2) It was promised the apostles, and (3) It would be received by the apostles in Jerusalem.

As the apostles waited in accord with the Lord's instructions here is what occurred: "And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them. And they were filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." (Acts 2:2-4) This is a description of Holy Spirit baptism — the spirits of the apostles were so overwhelmed in the Holy Spirit's influence that it is termed a baptism, or an immersion. As Christ's suffering is spoken of as a baptism, not a mere sprinkling but a complete immersion in sorrows, (Lk. 12:50), just so this act is a total immersion in the Holy Spirit. The word "baptize" signifies an immersion.

The First Example, A. D. 33

The first case on record, the one our Lord speaks of as a baptism, occurs in the year 33 and is described in Acts 2:1-4. We have already shown what the act was in this case, so now we intend to consider the attendant circumstances, the subjects, and the design or purpose.

I. The Attendant Circumstances, or Demonstration.

1. "A sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind." (vs. 2)
2. "It (the sound) filled all the house where they were sitting." (vs. 2)
3. "There appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each of them." (vs. 3)
4. "Began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." (vs. 4)
5. Many nationalities heard and understood their speech. (vs. 5-11)

The first three incidents mentioned preceded their being "filled with the Holy Spirit" and the last two were the consequence of their baptism. It is well to observe here that many claim the baptism of the Holy Spirit but deny these attendant circumstances. Many of our religious friends staunchly affirm that the baptism of the Spirit continues today but deny that anyone possesses the power to speak with tongues, and repudiate every one of the five demonstrations mentioned above. Why not be consistent? If the baptism continues surely these circumstances and results would follow it. The unscriptural teaching of total hereditary depravity has forced the denominational world into the necessity of claiming some miraculous influence to change a person who is said to be so depraved as to be incapable of hearing and obeying the Word of God.

Our Holiness friends are just as inconsistent on the subject. They claim some of the miraculous results of such a baptism but openly repudiate others. Claiming to speak with tongues they engage in an incomprehensible jargon that no one can understand. Instead of being heard and understood by foreigners, not even their own brethren know what they are saying. They usually lay no claim to having heard the "sound as of a rushing mighty wind," or having seen "Tongues like as of fire." Their efforts are pitiful on Mark 16:17, 18. They boldly assert that they alone accept this scripture, but show the insincerity of their claim by uttering refusing to handle serpents, or drink poison. The modern Holiness delusion together with all other kindred movements should be frankly exposed.

II. The Subjects.

1. The apostles — To them the promise was made. (Acts 1:4, 5; 1:26; 2:1)
2. Not the multitude — They came together afterward. (Acts 2:6)
3. The promise in Acts 2:39 is of the gift of the Holy Spirit mentioned in the preceding verse; not the baptism recorded in the first part of the chapter.

Having learned from the above statements that the apostles were the subjects and that Christ made the promise to them as individuals, we conclude that no one can rightfully claim that this wonderful occurrence was general and

applies unto all men. All modern assumptions concerning the continuance of Holy Spirit baptism rest on the error of wresting the Scriptures to make a general promise out of a special one. Deception, or ignorance is the father of the false claim. It promotes confusion and creates false expectations.

III. The Purpose or Design.

1. Not to save the apostles as all will admit. They had been followers of Christ for three years previous to this.
2. Not for remission of sins. They had been prepared by John's work. (Lk. 1:17; Mk. 1:4)
3. To teach, and bring to remembrance all Jesus had said. (Jno. 14:26)
4. To guide the apostles into all truth. (Jno. 16:13)
5. To confer power unto the apostles. (Acts 1:8)

Briefly stated we have discovered the purpose, or purposes, of the baptism of the Spirit in this first example. Since we have learned that it was not to save souls, nor to remit sins, in this case one of the chief claims for its continuance is exploded. It is easy to see from a consideration of the above scriptures that a special purpose was accomplished, viz; the divine guidance of the apostles in revealing the will of Christ. This purpose has already been accomplished (Heb. 2:3, 4), and that being true

what purpose could it now serve, if received?

The Second Example, A. D. 41

The record of this case may be read in Acts 10:44-48, but chapters 10 and 11 should be read in full in order to get the complete account of the matter. The setting on this occasion is among the Gentiles in Caesarea, with a Jewish preacher (the apostle Peter) and six of his Jewish brethren as witnesses. (Acts 11:12) The account reads as follows: "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard the word. And they of the circumcision that believed were amazed, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ." (Acts 10:44-48)

I. The Attendant circumstances, or Demonstration.

1. The Holy Spirit fell, as on the apostles in the beginning. (Acts 11:15)
2. They spoke with tongues and magnified God. (Acts 10:46)
3. The Jewish witnesses were amazed. (Acts 10:45)

In considering the attendant circumstances in this case we notice first of all that the apostle Peter in describing the event could find no parallel to it except on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. Nothing like it had occurred since that memorable day when the apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit and endowed with miraculous powers. Else Peter would have said, "the Holy Spirit fell on them as it has on believers from the beginning." The circumstances were similar to the demonstration on Pentecost and the Jewish witnesses were amazed "because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit." Such a demonstration broke down the barriers of racial and religious prejudice and convinced the Jews that the Gentiles were acceptable unto God.

II. The Subjects

1. Cornelius.

2. His household.

Peter tells us in Acts 15:7 that God chose him to declare the gospel to the Gentiles that they might hear the word and believe. The choice was appropriate for the speaker was one bold and courageous enough to violate prejudice and tradition to do whatever God instructed. The choice of the first Gentile subject to enter the church of Christ is just as fortunate and indicates the wisdom and goodness of God. Cornelius was a devout man that "feared God with all his house." (Acts 10:2) He was not

a profligate Gentile; nor yet a circumcized proselyte. He was a fine moral character held in high esteem even by the Jews. And of such a person the Jewish nation would be less likely to be envious when God gave him opportunity to hear and obey the truth. The record indicates that his household had the same respect for God as did Cornelius (Acts 10:2), therefore, the subjects on this occasion show the wisdom and goodness of Jehovah.

III. The Purpose, or Design.

1. Not to remove total depravity, (Acts 10:1-4), a fine moral man already.
2. Not to purify the heart — that was done through faith. (Acts 15:8, 9)
3. Not for remission of sins — that was promised through the name of Christ (Acts 10:43), and received when they were baptized in his name. (Acts 10:48)
4. Not to save them, (Acts 11:14), Peter was to speak words for this purpose.
5. To amaze and convince the Jews that the Gentiles “had been granted repentance unto life.” (Acts 10:45, 46; 11:15-18)

We have presented plainly and clearly the Scriptures on the subject for your earnest consideration; now let's hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Holy Spirit baptism was a “promise” of the Father (Acts 1:4) to certain persons (Acts 1:5), and was never promised to the

world in general. It was bestowed to accomplish two definite purposes: (1) To endow the apostles with power to declare all truth (Jno. 16:13; 14:26); (2) To convince the Jewish nation that the Gentiles were subjects of the gospel as well as the Jews. Both of these purposes have already been accomplished, therefore, we do not expect any such demonstration in this present age. As to the need of such an occurrence to remove sin, or depravity it never served this purpose when it was given as we have already shown. The one baptism of today (Eph. 4:4) is water baptism. (Acts 10:47, 48)

We can show of a certainty that the "one baptism" that Paul speaks of (Eph. 4:4) is not Holy Spirit baptism. Because:

1. Paul administered it (Acts 18:8; 19:1-5) and Christ alone could administer Holy Spirit baptism. (Matt. 3:11)
2. Holy Spirit baptism was a promise (Acts 1:4) and baptism in the name of the Lord was a command (Acts 10:48)
3. Holy Spirit baptism was never performed in any name, but the "one baptism" was in the name of the Lord. (Acts 19:5; Matt. 28:19)
4. Baptism in the name of Christ was "for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38), and Holy Spirit baptism was for no such purpose.

Therefore, we conclude that though in earlier years we read of the baptism of John, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the baptism of fire, and the baptism of the commission, that in A.D. 60 when Paul wrote Eph. 4:4 there was only one baptism in force or effect. It is further evident that this one baptism was the baptism of the commission which was performed in water in the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit for the remission of sins. All previous baptisms had been superseded by this "one" except the baptism of fire which will be received by the wicked after judgment. (Rev. 20:14, 15; Matt. 3:12) Any person claiming the baptism of the Holy Spirit today, does so without a vestige of Scriptural proof.

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