

## The Baptism Of The Holy Spirit

by John Isaac Edwards

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is a Bible subject (Jn. 1:32-34). Thus, we look to the Bible to learn what is revealed about Holy Spirit baptism.

### 1) *Administered By Christ.*

John announced, “I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire” (Lk. 3:16). This announcement is referred to in all four gospel accounts (Mt. 3:11; Mk. 1:8; Jn. 1:33). This was not a general promise of Holy Spirit baptism, no more than fire baptism was promised to all in John’s audience. The statement simply identifies the administrator of Holy Spirit baptism — Christ — it does not specify who would be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

### 2) *Promised To The*

*Apostles.* One of the basic rules of Bible study is to consider who is being spoken to.

Chapters 14, 15 and 16 in the book of John record conversations of the Lord with the apostles. The setting is “...the feast of the passover...” (Jn. 13:1-4). According to Matthew’s parallel account, Jesus “...sat down with the twelve” (Mt. 26:19). Christ informed the

apostles that He was going to the Father (Jn. 16:16-17, 28), but that He would not leave them “comfortless” (Jn. 14:18). The Holy Spirit, the Comforter, would fill the place of Jesus with the apostles. Notice the promise: “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and, shall be in you” (Jn. 14:16-17). Also note John 14:26; 15:26-27; 16:12-13. The two-fold office of the Holy Spirit with and in the apostles was the **revealing office** — “...teach you all things...” — and the **reminding office** — “bring all things to your remembrance...” (Jn. 14:26). The promise concerning the Comforter was not a general promise; it was a special promise to the apostles. To apply the special promise of the Holy Spirit to all believers generally is to erase the special mission of the Comforter to the apostles!

Jesus told the apostles, “And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high” (Lk. 24:49). Acts 1:2-8 links the promise of the Father with the baptism of the Holy

Spirit, and makes it clear that the announcement of Holy Spirit baptism applied only to the apostles. Note the limitations of the promise:

**Limited as to persons** — The apostles (v. 2).

**Limited as to place** — Jerusalem (v. 4).

**Limited as to period** — Not many days hence (v. 5).

**Limited as to purpose** — To empower the apostles as witnesses unto Christ (v. 8).

The thought that men today receive Holy Spirit baptism cannot be right for it would involve the wrong persons, the wrong place, the wrong period, and the wrong purpose!

### 3) *Received By The*

*Apostles.* Acts 2:4 records, “And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” A careful reading of the context shows that only the apostles received Holy Spirit baptism on Pentecost. It is a basic rule of grammar that a pronoun refers back to the nearest noun with which it agrees in person, number, and gender. The pronouns “they” and “them” in Acts 2:4 refer back to “... Matthias...with the eleven apostles” (Acts 1:26). Those who received the Holy Spirit on this occasion “...began to speak with

other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:4). The apostles were the speakers at this gathering (Acts 2:7, 14, 37). “... many signs and wonders were done by the apostles” (Acts 2:43). In an effort to get Holy Spirit baptism to others, some maintain the 120 (Acts 1:15), in addition to the apostles, received Holy Spirit baptism on Pentecost. If so, why did they not speak, and why were they inactive in doing signs and wonders? Not to mention the fact that such is beyond the scope of the promise and grammar rules don’t allow it.

4) **Gentiles Received “The Like Gift.”** When Peter rehearsed the matter of the Gentiles receiving the word of God, he said, “And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?” (Acts 11:15-17). This was one of three miracles associated with the conversion of Cornelius, a Gentile: (1) Cornelius’ vision

(Acts 10:3); (2) Peter’s trance (Acts 10:10); (3) The Holy Spirit falling on them (Acts 10:44). Acts 11 is significant in this case as Peter “...expounded it by order unto them...” (Acts 11:4), showing the Holy Spirit came on the Gentiles as Peter “...began to speak...” (Acts 11:15). Peter made reference to this occurrence at the Jerusalem discussion. “And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith” (Acts 15:8-9). The Gentiles received “the like gift” for the benefit of the Jews to convince them, “... Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life” (Acts 11:18).

5) **Questions For Those Claiming Holy Spirit Baptism Today.** Have you been with the Lord from the beginning? (Jn. 15:27). Can you speak with other tongues as the Spirit empowered the apostles on Pentecost? (Acts 2:4-11). Do you have a complete and infallible recollection of whatsoever the Lord said? (Jn. 14:26). Do you have to think before you speak? (Mt. 10:19-20). Why are you and others who claim Holy Spirit

baptism members of different denominations, seeing there is but one body, one Spirit, and one baptism? (Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Cor. 12:13). Why do you and others who claim Holy Spirit baptism teach contradictory doctrines, seeing there is one Spirit, the Spirit of truth? (Jn. 16:12-13). Why should we believe you and not them? How did you receive it? Of whom did you receive it? Were you active or passive? If Holy Spirit baptism is such a wonderful experience, as you claim, and tell others they need to get it, why did those in the New Testament who received it not say and do such? How do I get it? If Holy Spirit baptism was then bestowed upon all converts as we are told it now is, why were they “astonished” when folks received it (Acts 10:45), and why did Peter associate it with “the beginning” (Acts 11:15)? The language shows that such an event had not come under their notice from the beginning until that time. This indicates such was unusual and exceptional! How do you explain the statement, “There is...one baptism” (Eph. 4:4-5)?

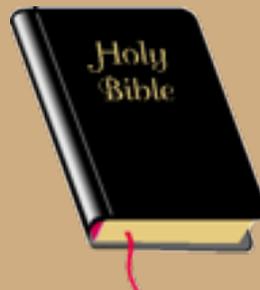
Like the baptism of Moses (1 Cor. 10:2) and John (Acts 19:3), Holy Spirit baptism belongs to the past.

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