

## Holy Spirit Baptism

When we are talking about the number of times the baptism of the Holy Spirit was administered, people seldom confuse that with the gift of the Holy Spirit. The gift of the Holy Spirit refers to the miraculous gifts that were given to others when the apostles laid hands on them (See 1 Corinthians 12 for a list of these gifts). Now, they did not receive the Holy Spirit baptism, but merely, part of that gift. In Acts 2:17-18, we read there of this pouring out of the Spirit upon the Jews and later, the Gentiles (Maids and Handmaidens). But, this was not baptism. Baptism is defined as “to plunge or dip,” not pour. In Acts 8:17, we have another example of this gift. Now, as to Cornelius in Acts 10, he too received the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:45), but the text does not say that this was the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Also, the text does not point to only Cornelius, but to other Gentiles who were there (Acts 10:44). As to the number of times the baptism of the Holy Spirit was administered, there are two and they all involve the apostles. But, let’s look a little further into the matter.

In Matthew 3:11-12, John the Baptizer said that Jesus was coming to baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire. From this passage, we learn first, that Jesus is the one who administers this baptism. The Holy Spirit or anyone else cannot perform this baptism. Second, knowing that the purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit was to reveal the word of God and to confirm the word of God (1 Peter 1:10-12), we learn that John is saying that either you will receive salvation from the word that will be presented or you will receive judgment because you have rejected that word. You see, this verse is talking about inspiration, not salvation or something else.

Now, this baptism of the Holy Spirit was promised by God to the apostles in that they would be guided into all truth (John 14:26). How do we know it was them? Because the text says that the Holy Spirit would bring to their remembrance what Jesus had already taught them. Furthermore, when we look at Acts 1:5, it states, “For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.” Who is Jesus talking to? He is not speaking to the multitude with him. If you will take the time to follow the pronouns from this verse all the way through Acts 2:4, you will clearly see that only the apostles received this baptism of the Holy Spirit, that is, they were full of Him. And, these men all received authority (Acts 1:8), they were all made ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:18-20), they were all witness of the resurrected Lord (John 15:27) with

Paul also being a witness (Acts 9), they were guided into all truth (John 14:26) and they were confirmed as true teachers of the truth (Hebrews 2:1-4).

Now, if someone says that we have the Holy Spirit baptism today, one needs to find out exactly what they mean because without a great deal of studying in the matter, it can become confusing. I mean, we do have the consequences of the Holy Spirit baptism today. It is called truth (John 17:17). However, remember that the Holy Spirit baptism was limited to the apostles. As for Paul, when you look at Acts 9:1-16, you will see that he too was baptized with the Holy Spirit. But, as to the pouring out of the Holy Spirit today, what this means, according to the Bible, is that you believe Christians have the ability to perform miracles. But, the problem with this is that people do not get wisdom miraculously today otherwise there would not be so much division in the church, they do not get knowledge of the word of God miraculously today because Paul said it vanished (1 Corinthians 13). We are not given faith miraculously today, no one is able to heal miraculously today otherwise the hospitals would be empty. No one can work a variety of miracles today as Moses did in Exodus otherwise they could end world hunger and give the glory to God. No one receives prophecies miraculously today because Paul said they would cease and they have. No one can miraculously discern or read the hearts, minds and soul of men. No one is able to miraculously begin speaking a different language that they know nothing about, nor can one interpret miraculously a foreign language they have never heard otherwise the mission fields would be filled of them and would have no need of translators. None of these gifts of the Holy Spirit exist today because miracles were designed to confirm the word of God (Mark 16:17-20) and it has already been confirmed. Besides, the only way that the miraculous could be given was by the laying on of the apostles hands (Acts 8:14-19) and they are all long gone.

Now, indeed a person does change into a new creature, but according to Romans 6:1-4, it happens at baptism. They arise from baptism and walk in newness of life. Being baptized is the only way God will remove our sins (Acts 2:38) and without being born again from baptism, we cannot inherit eternal life (John 3:1-5). It is only then, that a man becomes a Christian and allows the word of God, which was given by the Holy Spirit, to dwell in his heart.