
WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM

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John the Baptist's words to a Jewish audience are recorded in Matthew 3:11, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16, and John 1:33. It is a general promise of Jesus administering a baptizing with the Holy Spirit. There is no specific indication in the promise of who the "you" will be, whether universal or limited. As someone once observed, a prediction/prophecy is best understood in light of its fulfillment, which we will notice next.

Jesus promised the apostles that He would send the Holy Spirit as a Comforter to help them and guide them into all truth after His ascension (Jn. 14:16; 20:22).

Jesus commanded the apostles to remain in Jerusalem to receive the promise and power (Lk. 24:49; Acts 1:4-8). An important fact is that He makes a direct link to the words of John the Baptist and the promise made and directly applies it here to the apostles (v. 5). Remember that some of the apostles were disciples of John the Baptist, such as Andrew and probably John, to name two if not more (Jn. 1:35-42).

The Holy Spirit fell upon the apostles on Pentecost, and they were all "filled with the Holy Spirit" and began to speak in tongues. Peter affirms that this was a fulfillment of Joel's prophecy, beginning the process of "pouring out the Spirit on all flesh" (which is limited to human flesh and only those who were privileged to be baptized in the Spirit or to have apostolic hands laid on them). Peter then states that what they witnessed that day was from Jesus, who received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit and had poured out what they then saw and heard (outpouring of Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues).

As a side note, after Philip preached and converted many souls in Samaria, Peter and John were sent there to lay hands on the converts. Simon observed that it was by the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given (Acts 8:4-20). This was conferring the power of the gifts of the Spirit, and only the apostles could do this (Philip could not).

At the house of the Gentile centurion, Cornelius, Peter and the six Jewish brethren with him, observed that the Holy Spirit fell on the Gentile hearers, and they spoke in tongues. Peter later explained what happened (Acts 11:1-18) and linked what happened at Cornelius' house with what happened "at the beginning" (Pentecost) (v. 15) which explains what he meant when he said in 10:47 that they "have received the Holy Spirit just as we have." He then makes reference to the words of John the Baptist (as Jesus had done) (v. 16). He goes all the way back to Pentecost to reference a similar incident (he does not reference Acts 8 or any other incident). These two incidents - Pentecost and house of Cornelius--are the only scripture fulfillments of the promise of the baptizing with the Holy Spirit. Jesus and Peter both link them to the promise spoken by John the Baptist. As an additional note, Peter in Acts 15 again references the incident with Cornelius and notes that it was a sign of God's acknowledgment or confirmation of the Gentiles as welcome into the kingdom of Christ "by giving them the Holy Spirit as He did to us" (vv. 7-9). From the above evidence, I contend that there were two, and only two, fulfillments of the promise of baptism in the Holy Spirit which fulfilled God's purpose.

Several years later, when Paul authors the epistle to the Ephesians, he states clearly that there is "one baptism" (4:5). If the promise of baptism in the Holy Spirit and the command of baptism in water are both continuous for all who are saved today, then there are TWO baptisms. This would be incompatible and contradictory to scripture. I contend that Holy Spirit baptism fulfilled its purpose in the two manifestations of it in the first century then ceased, therefore the one baptism is water baptism continues to be a command of God unto salvation (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; 10:47-48; 22:16; etc.). Our Pentecostal friends affirm Holy Spirit baptism and ignore water baptism for the remission of sins. They are in error. And so are those who contend that both Holy Spirit baptism and water baptism continue for all men who come to God today.

This article only concerns the question of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. More study in the Scriptures would be necessary to discern the truth concerning the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:9), the leading of the Holy Spirit

(Rom. 8:14), the walking in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16), the sealing of the Holy Spirit of promise (Eph. 1:13), the intercession of the Spirit (Rom. 8:26-27), and the gift of the Spirit (Acts 2:38).
