

HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM, THE MIRACULOUS GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT & THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

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When Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit, he lied to God (Acts 5:3, 4). Later in that same chapter when Peter proclaims that “We must obey God rather than men” (v. 29), he made reference to the Holy Spirit as “whom” (Acts 5:32). The Holy Spirit is one of three personalities who possess the one Divine Essence. Yet, there is still much speculation and mystery in the minds of men concerning Who the Holy Spirit is and what is His purpose or work.

Three areas that are often confused in the religious world are the three that make up the title of this article. Our Pentecostal friends and neighbors will argue that if you possess the Holy Spirit, it is because you have been baptized of the Holy Spirit and you will manifest the fact that you possess the Holy Spirit by doing miracles (the gift of tongues being the most popular gift that is claimed). However, when we study Scripture carefully, we learn that Holy Spirit baptism, the gift of the Holy Spirit and the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit are three separate and distinct things.

Let’s take some time and notice these three items and see what exactly Scripture teaches.

BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

In Joel 2:28 we read a prophecy concerning Holy Spirit baptism. Joel wrote, “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.” As the years passed and John the Baptist entered the scene, we recall that John spoke of this matter. In Matthew 3:11 John said, “I indeed baptize you in water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire” (see also Mark 8:1; Luke 3:16). Now we must consider that no one was ever commanded to be baptized of the Holy Spirit. It rather was a promise that would be fulfilled, and it would be fulfilled only by Jesus Christ. John bore witness of Christ saying:

And John bare witness, saying, I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven; and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize in water, he said unto me, Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and abiding upon him, **the same is he that baptizeth in the Holy Spirit**. And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God (John 1:32-34).

In continued study, we learn we only have two recorded instances of Jesus fulfilling this promise – In Acts 2 (the apostles who were Jews) and in Acts 10 (the house of Cornelius who were Gentiles). In remembering Joel’s prophecy, we recall he spoke of “all flesh” which was fulfilled in both the Jews and Gentiles.

Now let us take a moment and consider the purpose for Holy Spirit Baptism. In Mark 9:1 Jesus said, “Verily I say unto you, There are some here of them that stand by, who shall in no wise taste of death, till they **see the kingdom of God come with power**.” Later, near the time of His ascension, Jesus told the apostles “And behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city, **until ye be clothed with power** from on high” (Luke 2:49). In Acts 1 Luke will again remind us of the statement that Jesus made to the apostles. “But ye shall **receive power, when** the Holy Spirit is come upon you” (Acts 1:8). This is the same power of which Jesus spoke that would usher in the kingdom in Mark 9:1, the power from on high (Luke

2:49. Finally in Acts 2:4 we see the promise became a reality. “And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” The Holy Spirit came down upon them, and it served as the power that would bring the kingdom into the world (Acts 1:8).

In the case of Cornelius, we learn that the Spirit fell on the Gentiles as it had the Jews (the apostles) in Acts 2 (Acts 10:44 & 11:15). When we consider the response of the Jews when this most powerful event unfolded, we learn the purpose of Holy Spirit Baptism. The Jews marveled that the Gentiles received Holy Spirit Baptism and they concluded that God had granted salvation unto the Gentiles. Notice the words of Peter.

And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, even as on us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit. If then God gave unto them the like gift as he did also unto us, when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I, that I could withstand God? And when they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life (Acts 11:15-18).

So it is, in the case of Acts 2 Holy Spirit Baptism was for the purpose of ushering in the Kingdom with power. In the case of Acts 10, Holy Spirit Baptism was to put Heaven’s approval upon the Gentiles entering into the Kingdom without being channeled through Judaism.

THE MIRACULOUS GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

In 1 Corinthians 12-14 the apostle Paul addressed the subject of miraculous gifts. In chapter 12 he defined the gifts, and emphasized their use was to “profit withal” (v. 7). Chapter 13 emphasizes the necessity of love being the motivating factor behind their use. Paul also explains when the miraculous gifts would cease (vs. 8-13). In chapter 14, Paul will legislate concerning the use of these gifts. There were limitations set upon their use.

Basically, there are two matters that must be understood concerning the miraculous gifts in the first century. First, we must recognize how a brother or sister in Christ received these miraculous gifts, and secondly, we must recognize that the miraculous gifts were never planned by God to be a permanent arrangement. They would cease!

Let’s deal first with how the miraculous gifts were received. In Acts 8 we are introduced to Simon the sorcerer. Simon was converted by Philip and he was amazed at the miracles that were being done (Acts 8:13). “Now when the apostles that were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John” (v. 14). Why did they send Peter and John? Peter and John were sent because they were apostles. The significance is seen in verse 18. “Now when Simon saw that **through the laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Spirit was given**, he offered them money.” Every Biblical example of a person or persons receiving miraculous gifts has the apostles laying hands on them, just as Luke highlighted for us in Acts 8:18). Let’s keep this fact in mind as we consider when the miraculous gifts would cease.

The Apostle Paul wrote, that the miraculous would come to an end, when “the perfect” was come. Notice 1 Corinthians 13:8-10.

Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

The “in part” is identified by Paul in this context as the revelation being distributed in a miraculous way. The “perfect” has to coincide with the “in part”. The language demands such a conclusion. Thus when Paul speaks of the “perfect” he is speaking of completed revelation. The Greek word translated “perfect” is *teleios*. It means complete, of full age or perfect. It is that which is completed by a process. When completed revelation came into existence around the close of the first century, the need for miracles confirming the word ceased. Notice that the “perfect revelation” is that revelation which is complete, of full age or perfect.” It is that revelation which was completed by a process.

Paul taught the same divine truth in Ephesians 4. Paul wrote of Jesus Christ, “He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.” The gifts he has reference to here are the miraculous gifts introduced in 1 Corinthians 12. In verse 11 he lists those who would benefit the church by using these miraculous gifts. He said, “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.” As Paul continues he explains what would be accomplished and when this system would cease. Notice verses 12 and 13.

For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

Paul taught us that it would cease when “we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect [complete, or full grown] man, unto the measure of the fullness of Christ.” All of this speaks of full and completed revelation.

Now, remember it was by the laying on of apostles’ hands that this gift was received. The last apostle died around the close of the first century. Completed revelation came around the close of the first century. Paul taught that when completed revelation came, then the miraculous would cease. It is also reasonable to say that when the last apostle died, which was around the close of the first century, the ability to lay apostles’ hands ceased and thus the miraculous gifts could not be transmitted any longer. When the last individual that the apostles’ had laid hands on died, then the miraculous ceased. There would no longer be a need for revelation to be proclaimed and confirmed by this means.

THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

First we would turn our attention to the fact that we are dealing with the “gift,” singular, of the Holy Spirit. It is not the “gifts” of the Holy Spirit which would refer to the miraculous. In Acts 2:38, Peter said, “Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” Notice that the reception of the “gift of the Holy Spirit” was not by the laying on of apostles’ hands in this passage. It was rather received by obeying the command to repent and be baptized. In Acts 5:32, we make the same observation. “And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, **whom God hath given** to them that **obey him.**” Peter tells us it is a “Whom” that is given, not a what or it. The Holy Spirit was given to those that obeyed the gospel.

In Acts 6 we see a particular need that had to be addressed. The apostles’ solution to the problem was to choose out men from among you. These men, we note, were to be qualified men. Acts 6:3 tells us that one of the qualifications was that they were to be “full of the Spirit and of wisdom.” This qualification was to be met, before the apostles had laid their hands on them and before they received the miraculous gifts. These were full of the Spirit, because they had obeyed the gospel. Today, when men obey the gospel of Jesus Christ, they also receive the “gift of the

Holy Spirit. It is not miraculous, nor does the Spirit directly act upon our spirit. Yet men possess it none the less. It is this way in which our bodies are proclaimed to be “temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God” (1 Cor. 6:19, 20).

It is our hope that this study will be beneficial in helping to clear up some of the mystery that too often surrounds the Holy Spirit. May we all meditate on these truths as we study our Bible more and more.