

# What's the difference between the Baptism, and the gift of the Holy Spirit?

*Baptism* is from the Greek word “*baptisma*” which, according to “Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words,” means: “...the processes of immersion...” To be *baptized* with the Holy Spirit would mean you were *immersed* with the Holy Spirit.

## 1. Read *Acts 1:1-8*.

**A. Verses 2,3** tell us Christ gave instructions through the Holy Spirit to His Apostles over a period of 40 days after He rose from the dead.

**B. Verses 4-5** tells us, that on one of those occasions, “*He gave them this command: ‘Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which you have heard Me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’*”

**C.** When you are baptized in water you receive the “*gift of the Holy Spirit*” (***Acts 2:38***) meaning, the Holy Spirit is given to you as a *gift*. But, when you are “*baptized with the Holy Spirit,*” (***Acts 1:5***), Jesus said: “*you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you.*” (***Acts 1:8***)

**D.** All of the Apostles and Jesus were baptized in water as commanded by God (***Luke 7:29,30***) through John the Baptist (***Mark 1:9, John 3:22, John 4:1***), for the forgiveness of sins (***Luke 3:3***), and to seal their promise to obey the New Covenant or Testament (***Colossians 2:9-15***). Jesus told them they were reborn by the water and the Spirit (***John 3:3-5***). But, when the Apostles were *baptized with the Holy Spirit* on the Day of Pentecost, as Jesus promised, they were immersed with the Holy Spirit’s *power* (***Acts 1:5-8***).

## 2. Read *Acts 2*.

**A.** When Peter & the Apostle were baptized with the Holy Spirit as Jesus promised them, the Spirit spoke through them in every language represented that day (***verses 6-11***). And when Peter preached his first sermon, the people asked: “*What shall we do?*” (***Verse 37***). Peter answered in ***verse 38***: “*Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*” ***Verse 41*** says that 3,000 of them were then *baptized*.

**B.** Were the first 3,000 baptized with the Holy Spirit in full power like the Apostles, or baptized with water, so they could have forgiveness of sins and the Holy Spirit as a *gift*?

### 3. Read Acts 3-5.

A. After the 3,000 were baptized **chapter 3** tells of all the miracles the Apostles were able to do, but mentions none of the other 3,000 new Christians.

B. **Chapter 4:4** says “*the number of men grew to about 5,000.*” Then, by the time you get to **verses 23,24** it says this number met together with Peter and John, and **verse 31-33** continues: “*After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly...with great power the Apostles continued to testify.*” Still no mention of any special powers from any the new Christians that were baptized for *the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

C. Then in **Chapter 5** we read about two of those new Christians who lied to the Holy Spirit and were struck dead (doesn't sound like they were immersed in the Holy Spirit). And by the time you get to **5:12-16**, you read: “*The Apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders among the people* (which, according to **II Corinthians 12:12**, was the mark of an Apostle — not a Christian). *And all the believers used to meet together in Solomon's Colonnade. No one else dared join them...people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mats so that at least Peter's shadow might fall on some of them..Crowds gathered...their sick...and all of them were healed.*”

### 4. It is not until you get to **Chapter 6** that you find another Christian that gets the Holy Spirit's power. **Verse 8** says: “*Now, Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, did great wonders and miraculous signs among the people.*”

A. What made the difference? **Read verses 1-7.**

(1) The Apostles needed help taking care of the widows, and in **verse 3** they asked the congregation to: “*choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit...*”

(2) They then presented these men to the Apostles who, according to **verse 6**, “*prayed and laid their hands on them.*”

### 5. **Chapter 7** tells us of the death of Stephen, and then **Chapter 8:1** says: “*On that day a great persecution broke out against the church.*”

A. **But, this forced all the Christians out of Jerusalem and thereby spread the Gospel throughout the world.** It forced Philip to Samaria, and, according to **8:6,7**, he became the second man (other than an Apostle) to demonstrate the Holy Spirit's power.

(1) **How did he get this Power?** Remember, in **Chapter 6:1-7**, Philip was one of the seven that the Apostles laid hands on!

(2) **Verse 12** says Philip baptized everyone who believed (just like the Apostles did at the beginning).

(3) **Verse 13** says even a sorcerer named Simon was baptized, and *“followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw.”* Obviously, he was only *baptized* in water for the *forgiveness of sins* and *gift of the Holy Spirit*. He was not baptized, or immersed in the Holy Spirit’s power.

(4) But, then Simon uncovers the secret to getting special powers from the Holy Spirit in **verses 14-18**: *“When the Apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. When they arrived, they prayed for them (as they did for Philip in **Chapter 6**) that they might receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon (power) any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus (**Acts 2:38**). Then Peter and John placed their hands on them (as they did for Philip in **Chapter 6**), and they received the Holy Spirit (it came upon them in power). When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the Apostles’ hands, he offered them money...”*

**B.** Notice that even though Philip had the special powers of the Holy Spirit, he could not pass them to anyone else. **Only an Apostle could lay hands on a baptized Christian and give special powers (8:18)!**

**C.** After Philip left Samaria, **verse 26** says the Holy Spirit sent him to an Ethiopian man. After explaining the Scriptures to him, **verse 36** says the man asked Philip: *“Look, here is water. Why shouldn’t I be baptized?”*

(1) Notice the man asked Philip to baptize him in water not the Holy Spirit?

(2) Remember, Philip couldn’t baptize him with the Holy Spirit anyway. It had to be an Apostle (**8:18**)

(3) **Verse 39** then tells us that when they came up out of the water, the Holy Spirit took Philip away, and the man never saw Philip again.

(4) So, the Holy Spirit wanted Philip to baptize the man with water (not with the Holy Spirit), just as the Apostles did the first 3,000 in **Acts 2:38**, and just as he did the Samaritan people in **8:12**. The only difference was, that the Apostles didn’t come down and lay their hands on this man to give him special powers of the Holy Spirit, as only they could (**8:18**).

(5) Remember, not until they laid their hands on the first seven men in **Chapter 6** did any of the first Christians receive any special powers (Baptism of the Holy Spirit).

**6. Chapter 9 tells us of the conversion of the Apostle Paul (then called Saul).**

**A.** Saul was killing Christians ever since he took part in the killing of the first one (Stephen) in **8:1**.

**B.** In *verses 1-11* the Lord struck him blind, and then sent Ananias to him.

**C.** *Verses 17* says that Ananias placed his hands on Saul “...so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit;” and then the next *verse 18* says: “Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized...”

(1) In Paul’s own words in **Acts 22:13-16**, Ananias “stood beside me and said, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight!’ And at that very moment I was able to see him. Then he said: ‘The god of our fathers has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on His name’.”

(2) Notice, by Paul’s own words, Ananias laid hands on him to heal him of blindness, not to baptize him with the Holy Spirit, but with water. If Ananias had laid hands on him to baptize him with the Holy Spirit, then why did he need to be baptized after that laying on of hands to “wash your sins away?” (**22:16**).

**7. Chapter 10 tells us about the first Gentile Christians.**

**A.** *Verses 1-23* tell us about the vision from the Lord that finally convinced Peter that Gentiles could also become Christians. While Peter is having the vision, an angel directed Cornelius (a Gentile) to send men to bring Peter to his house to tell him how to become a Christian.

**B.** *Verse 23* says that Peter went to Cornelius’ house who had invited “his relatives and close friends” (*verse 24*).

(1) Peter brought witnesses with him (**11:12** says there were 6 Jewish men).

(2) Why? *Verses 28,29* say that it was until now, the first Christians were all Jews, and it was against Jewish Law for a “Jew to associate with a Gentile or visit him. But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean.”

**C.** *Verses 34-42* tell us the first sermon Peter preached to Gentiles

(1) He starts with John’s baptism (*verse 37*), and then goes on to how God

anointed Jesus (which, according to *Mark 1:9-11* was at His baptism) with “*the Holy Spirit and power.*” Then he told them how they crucified Him, and how He raised from the dead, and appeared to the Apostles and many other witnesses.

(2) Then, in *verse 42*, Peter told them about Jesus’ command to them before He ascended (*Matthew 28:18-20*), which was: “*Go, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit...*”

**D.** In *verse 43* he told these Gentiles that “*everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through His name.*”

(1) Peter said nothing of baptism, like he did in *Acts 2:38* for the first Jewish Christians.

**E.** Then, *verses 44-46* says that “*while Peter was speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on* (same Greek word used in *8:16* when the Apostles laid hands on the Samaritans that Philip baptized) *all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues...*”

(1) **How is it that the first Gentile Christians received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit before water baptism?** Up until now, only the Apostles were baptized with the Holy Spirit (being immersed in the Spirit’s power). Every Christian up until now had to be baptized in water and only received the Holy Spirit as a gift until an Apostle laid hands on them. None of them received any special powers apart from the laying on of hands by an Apostle (*8:18*).

(2) **Peter explains why this happened when he went back to Jerusalem to report to the Jewish Christians** (with his six Jewish witnesses), who did not think that Gentiles could become Christians (*10:28,29*). *Chapter 11:15-17* says: “*Just as I was starting to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us* (Jewish Apostles) *at the beginning* (Day of Pentecost in *Chapter 2*). *Then I remembered what the Lord had said, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ So, if God gave them the same gift* (Holy Spirit in *Acts 2:38*) *as He gave us* (Jewish Apostles) *when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could oppose God*” (and not let Gentiles become Christians).

(3) **None of the first Jewish Christians believed Gentiles could become Christians.** They were not going to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with them unless God did something to prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that Gentiles could become Christians. So, God gave Cornelius and his household the same baptism of the Holy Spirit as He did the Apostles on the Day of Pentecost. It was as if the Day of Pentecost was the start of Christianity for the Jews. And now this day at Cornelius’ house was the Day to start Christianity for the Gentiles. So, to

show that Jews and Gentiles are equal, the Holy Spirit immersed them with equal power (the only thing that could convince an Apostle).

**F. So, Gentile Christians don't need to be baptized with water? Read 10:47,48:**

*"Then Peter said, 'Can anyone keep these people (Gentiles) from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.' So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ (just like the first 3,000 Jews were ordered by Peter).*

**G. Remember, the last command Jesus gave His Apostles** before they started the Church on the Day of Pentecost was **Matthew 28:19,20**: *"Go and make disciples of all nations baptizing them..."* That included the Gentiles!

**H. This was the only time someone was baptized with the Holy Spirit before or without water baptism!** The reason was so that the Jews would accept the Gentiles as fellow Christians, equal as Holy Spirit filled brothers in Christ, and allow them to be baptized in water in the name of Jesus Christ (which was how you became a Christian in the beginning).

**8. So, why did only the Apostles receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit (immersed in the Spirit's power)?** How else would the new Christians know who to believe and follow, if there were not a clear distinction between the Apostles and all other Christians?

**A.** The only ones in the room with Jesus at the Last Supper were His Apostles. It was at this table that Jesus said the following words to them in **John 16:13-15**: *"But when He, the Spirit of Truth comes, He will guide you (Apostles) into all Truth. He will not speak on His own; He will speak only what He hears, and He will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to Me (Christ) by taking from what is mine and making it known to you (Apostles). All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you"(Apostles).*

**B. Ephesians 3:3-6:** *"That is the mystery made known to me (Apostle Paul) by revelation, as I have already written briefly. In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy Apostles and prophets. This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus."*

(1) Could "prophets" also write down New Testament Scriptures? **II Peter 3:2** says: *"I want you to recall the words spoken in the past (Old Testament) by the holy prophets, and the commands given by our Lord and Savior (New Testament) through your Apostles."*

(2) Only the Apostles could speak and write down New Testament Scripture (as

Jesus told them at the Last Supper). They were the appointed leaders of the Church. That is why the Holy Spirit only baptized or completely immersed the Apostles with His power. The Apostles had to be more powerful than the other Christians in order to back up their supreme authority in speaking the words of Jesus Christ.

**9. II Corinthians 12:12 says the mark of an Apostle was signs, wonders, and miracles.** They were the only ones to have the full power of the Holy Spirit, and the only ones who could pass on the Spirit's power. This was confirmation to all Christians who they should listen to and follow.

**A. II Thessalonians 2:9** warns that Satan will enable some to do counterfeit signs, wonders and miracles.

**B. II Corinthians 11:13** says that these people will claim to be Apostles of Christ.

**C.** Jesus warned in **Matthew 7:15-23** that “*Many will say to me on the day, ‘Lord, did we not prophecy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers’.*”

**D. Galatians 1:6-9** warns that even if they were true Apostles, they still can't change the original Gospel

(1) No one could add to or take away from the original revelations of God  
(**Revelation 22:18,19**).

(2) If we don't go beyond what is written we won't be fooled (**I Corinthians 4:6**).

(3) **Hebrews 13:8,9** warns: “*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings.*”