

Spirit as promised in Acts 2:38 — the non-miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit; but they had not received any *miraculous power*. It was only after these men were chosen, and the apostles laid their hands on them, that they were able to perform miracles! (Acts 6:8; 8:5,6).

5. Today, do believers in Christ receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

ANSWER: No. Because that special baptism was promised and given only to the apostles (representing the Jewish people) and to Cornelius and his household (representative of Gentiles, Acts 10). Other than these, there are no instances of Holy Spirit baptism recorded in the Scriptures. The apostles could select **certain worthy ones** and **lay their hands on them**, giving them **individual miraculous gifts**, but **those people could not give the gifts to others** (Acts 6:6; 8:14-17). We see this truth in Acts 5:12 “*And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people...*” and in Acts 8:15: “*when they [the apostles] were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:*

This limited the miraculous working of the Holy Spirit to the first century, in the infancy of the church, while the Scriptures were in the process of being written and confirmed by the miraculous power of the writers (Mark 16:20).

6. What do people receive today when they are baptized?

ANSWER: When we obey the Lord, we receive the promised *gift of the Holy Spirit* — *God’s Spirit, dwelling within us and giving us spiritual life* — as recorded in Acts 2:38 and Romans 8:9-11, which involves no miraculous power.

Why do we not receive miraculous power today? Because we have the confirmed Word of God to guide us (Mark 16:20; John 20:30, 31), and faith comes by hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17), not through seeing a miracle. Historically, all pagan religions have claimed the power of miracles. We cannot go everywhere to prove or disprove claims. Truly, the “more excellent” way, as promised in 1 Corinthians 12:31; 13:8-10 — is God’s perfect written Word — the New Testament.

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Do We All Receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit?

J.C. Choate



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Many believe that all who obey the Lord receive, or *should receive*, the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Believing this, they conclude that this gives them the power to do miraculous things as the apostles did in their day. To convince themselves and others of this, they attempt to prove that the 120 believers of Acts 1:15 received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, even as the apostles did, in Acts 2:1-4.

Please consider these questions and answers:

1. Who was promised the Comforter or the Holy Spirit before the Lord's departure from this world?

ANSWER: Speaking to the *apostles*, Christ said, "*But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning*" [not every person of the 120 had been with Christ from the beginning] (John 15: 26,27). Again, speaking to the eleven apostles who were gathered with Him (Acts 1:2,4) on the Mount of Olives just before His ascension to heaven, Jesus

said, "*And, behold, I will send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem, until you be endued with power from on high*" (Luke 24:49). Also read Acts 1:8.

2. Did the 120 disciples of Acts 1 receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

ANSWER: Reading through the first and second chapters of Acts, one can readily see that the apostles were the focal point. The original text of the Scriptures was not divided into chapters and verses. It read, from Acts 1:26 concerning Matthias, the man chosen to replace Judas, that "*he was numbered with the eleven apostles. Now when the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they [the apostles] were all with one accord in one place...and they were all [the apostles] filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance...*" (Acts 2:1,4).

The listeners marveled at hearing these varied languages, and they asked, "*Look, are not all these who speak Galileans?*" (v. 7) Not all the 120 would have been Galileans, but the *apostles* were from Galilee. They were the ones who had been promised the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and they were the ones who received Him in this miraculous way.

3. Was "the gift of the Holy Spirit", as promised to the multitude in Acts 2:38,

the same as the miraculous baptism of the Holy Spirit?

ANSWER: No, it was simply the giving of the Holy Spirit Himself, *the renewal of spiritual life within the obedient*, given to all who are scripturally baptized (Acts 5:32).

4. Some people think that on the day of Pentecost all believers received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, with the accompanying power to do miracles. If so, why was it necessary for the apostles to lay their hands on the seven disciples chosen for special service in Acts 6:3-6, in order for them to have miraculous power?

ANSWER: Actually, only the apostles had received the **baptism of the Holy Spirit**, while all others had been **baptized only in water**, receiving the **forgiveness of their sins** and the **indwelling** of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, only the apostles had the power to do miracles. Neither the 120 of Acts 1:15 nor the 3000 of Acts 2:41 had received the *baptism of the Holy Spirit as the apostles had*.

Yet in Acts 6:1-8, when the apostles asked that seven good men be chosen to serve the people, they designated that they be "*men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom...*" It is clear that these men had already received the Holy Spirit — *the gift of the Holy*