
BIBLE TALK

This week the question is: **How are men “baptized by one Spirit” into one body?**

1 Corinthians 12:13

13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body; whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.

What is the baptism mentioned in this passage?

The baptism mentioned here is a baptism that results in men being placed into the body of Christ. The body of Christ is the church of the Lord (Eph 1:22-23; Col 1:18). Which baptism resulted in men being placed into the body of Christ – Holy Spirit baptism or water baptism?

To answer this question, we need to examine both Holy Spirit baptism and water baptism.

HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM

Holy Spirit baptism was administered by Jesus Himself. It was never administered by a human being (Mk 1:8).

Holy Spirit baptism is a promise (Mk 1:8), not a command. Men **receive** promises; they **obey** commands.

Notice also that Holy Spirit baptism was not for the purpose of saving men from their sins. It was promised to men who were already saved from their sins.

Acts 1:5

5 "for John truly baptized with water, but you [apostles] shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

The apostles were already saved, so this passage clearly demonstrates that Holy Spirit baptism was not for the purpose of saving people from sins. Instead, Holy Spirit baptism was for the purpose of empowering men to work miracles (Acts 1:8). The purpose of this miraculous power was to confirm the message preached by the apostles (Mk 16:20; Heb 2:4). After all, since the apostles were teaching a new doctrine (Acts 17:19), they needed proof to demonstrate clearly that God was in favor of the doctrine.

Finally, Holy Spirit baptism occurred only twice in the scriptures. Not all Christians experienced this.

Acts 11:15-16

15 "And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon [the gentiles], as upon us **at the beginning**.

16 "Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, 'John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'

Peter did not say, "*The Holy Spirit fell on the gentiles just like He falls upon every single person that is saved.*" No ... Peter had to refer all the way back to "*the beginning*" (Pentecost) in order to find a previous example of Holy Spirit baptism. Since Holy Spirit baptism is not for the purpose of saving men, not everyone received this baptism. But the baptism mentioned in 1 Cor 12:13 is something that all Christians have experienced – "*by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body,*" the scripture says.

In summary, here's what we know about Holy Spirit baptism:

- It was administered by the Lord Jesus Himself – not by any man.
- It was a promise, not a command.
- It was not for the purpose of saving people from their sins.
- It empowered men with the ability to work miracles to confirm the divine origin of the gospel message.
- Only a few people experienced Holy Spirit baptism.

WATER BAPTISM

In contrast, water baptism is administered by men and is designed to place men into a relationship with the Lord. Notice:

Matthew 28:19

19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Here we see that men are made disciples of the Lord by being baptized in water. How do we know this refers to water baptism rather than Holy Spirit baptism? Because this baptism is administered by men and is therefore water baptism.

Mark 16:15-16

15 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

16 "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; ...

Notice four things about this baptism:

- a) **This is a baptism which is administered by men.** Holy Spirit baptism is administered only by the Lord.
- b) **This baptism is a command to be obeyed.** Holy Spirit baptism is a promise to be received.
- c) **This baptism in water saves men.** Holy Spirit baptism not for the purpose of saving men from sin.
- d) **This baptism was for everyone** who believed and wanted to be saved.

According to Mk 16:16, what do men have to believe before they may be baptized? They must believe the gospel which was revealed by the Holy Spirit. Remember this, because it will prove very important in a moment.

Acts 2:38-39

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

39 "For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

Notice four things about this passage:

- a) **This baptism would be administered by men** – therefore this could not be Holy Spirit baptism.
- b) **This baptism is a command, not a promise** – therefore this cannot be Holy Spirit baptism.
- c) **This baptism is “for the remission of sins.”** Look carefully at Acts 2:38-39 verses and you will see clearly that the "gift of the Holy Spirit" was not "for the remission of sins," but came **afterwards**. Therefore, the "gift of the Holy Spirit was not "for the remission of sins." It did not save anyone from sin. That was not its purpose. (For a discussion of Acts 10-11, please ask for our tract, "The Case of Cornelius.")
- d) **This baptism was for everyone** who repented and wanted to have remission of sins.

What happened to all those who obeyed the command to be baptized in water “for the remission of sins”? They were all added to the church (Acts 2:41, 47) which is the “body” of Christ (Col 1:18).

1 CORINTHIANS 12:13

We have learned that water baptism is (a) the act of obedience which saves a man from his sins, (b) places one into the body of Christ, and (c) is commanded of everyone. Holy Spirit baptism was not for everyone and never saved anyone, but the baptism mentioned in 1 Cor 12:13 was for everyone. The baptism of 1 Cor 12:13 placed all who obeyed it into the body of Christ and Acts 2:41, 47 clearly demonstrates this is water baptism.

1 Corinthians 12:13

13 For by **one Spirit** we were all **baptized** into one body; whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.

Since baptism here clearly refers to water baptism, we have two things involved in man's conversion: (a) the Holy Spirit, and (b) water baptism. This should not surprise us, because Jesus said:

John 3:5

5 ... unless one is born **of water** and **the Spirit**, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

Being born "of water" refers to baptism in water. Being born "of the Spirit" means believing and submitting to the word of God revealed by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit would reveal the terms of salvation (Jn 20:22-23) and those revealed instructions would save men from sin (Ja 1:21).

1 Peter 1:23

23 having been **born again**, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, **through the word of God** which lives and abides forever,

Men must believe the gospel revealed by the Holy Spirit and then submit to water baptism for the remission of sins. By doing this they are added to the body of Christ. This fits exactly with what Jesus taught in Mk 16:16 where we are told that men must believe what was revealed by the Spirit and then be baptized in water to be saved.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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