

## When Was Cornelius Saved?

There is so much confusion regarding the Holy Spirit among religious people. The best approach anyone can take is to go back to the Bible and see what it says. Cornelius will help us to better understand the work of the Holy Spirit.

Several important details are given about the Samaritans in Acts 8:12-17. Notice that they were baptized, but did not receive gifts of the Spirit immediately. Even though Philip, who had the gifts of the Spirit (cp. Acts 6:3-5), was present, these people had to wait until apostles came from Jerusalem because the Holy Spirit only came by their hands (Acts 8:18).

For Cornelius, the Spirit came directly by an act of God. In Acts 10:44, Luke records, "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word." Peter said in Acts 11:15, "And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning." Therefore, we must conclude that receiving the gifts of the Spirit by the hands of the apostles was not baptism in the Spirit. Otherwise, Peter would have been reminded of more recent baptisms in the Spirit, instead of referring back to Acts 2. Furthermore, since baptism in water came before receiving the Spirit in Acts 8, and it came after receiving the Spirit in Acts 10, we must conclude that the two have separate, unrelated purposes. Water baptism saves us (Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21) while Holy Spirit baptism confirmed the word of God (Mark 16:17-20; Hebrews 2:4).

If the Holy Spirit is guiding and teaching all of us, He would not contradict today what He taught back then. If there is a difference, then the conclusion must be that it is not the Holy Spirit. If you believe in Holy Spirit baptism and the subsequent miraculous gifts that accompany it (1 Corinthians 12:8-10), what evidence is given to you by God to support your claim? Cornelius began speaking in other known, verifiable languages as evidence that he received the Spirit (Acts 10:46; cp. 2:5-11, "his own language" and "our tongues"). Can you do that?

So is there any way in which we have the Spirit now? Paul commanded us to be "be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18). I am "filled with the Spirit" when I take the words the Spirit revealed (John 16:7-13) and use them to change my behavior and therefore "walk in the Spirit" (Galatians 5:16). I show the "fruit of the Spirit" in all its beautiful glory: "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (5:22-23). We could all use more filling of the Spirit, for this would chase away the devil and allow us to fill our hearts with the command of Paul in Philippians 4:8.

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