

BULLPIN: ACTS 8:14–17

14 Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, 15 who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, 16 for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.

God deliberately withheld the spirit from the Samaritan converts. The delay was only temporary. Until the apostles came down to investigate.

There are 5 different views on how this text shakes out. I have provided a summary below.

- **View #1 – Catholic View**
 - They believe this is the Biblical basis for the...
 - First stage being baptism and the second being confirmation by a bishop.
 - Cyprian “Exactly, the same thing happens with us today; those who have been baptized in the church are presented to the bishops of the church so that by our prayer and the imposition of our hands they may receive the Holy Spirit.”

- **View #2 The Mainline Pentecostal with some (not all) Charismatics View**
 - Biblical basis as baptism of the spirit as a second blessing
 - First stage – conversion and regeneration
 - Second stage – Baptism *in* or *of* the holy Spirit often (not always) associated with the laying on of hands by a Pentecostal leader.
 - A lot of AG churches.

At this point to ask one question: is the two stage Samaritan experience to be regarded as the norm for Christian initiation? We do not deny that it happened in fact in two stages.

But we press the question: Is it God’s normal purpose that the reception of the Spirit is a second experience subsequent to conversion and baptism?

- **View #3 – John Calvin’s View**

It was not really two stages. They received salvation and the spirit...later they received manifestation of the spirit...like a dominating effect.

Calvin, “To sum up, since the Samaritans have the Spirit of adoption conferred on them already, the extraordinary graces of the spirit are added as a culmination.”

Most reformed authors follow in this line.

This was also the view of Matthew Henry and Henry Alford and most commentators.

- **View #4 – John Piper’s View**

You can be a believer, but not filled with the Holy Spirit.

He does not believe the moment of being filled with the Holy Spirit is evidenced by speaking in tongues.

He says, “Nowhere are we promised that we will speak in tongues or prophecy if we receive the Spirit. Here is the one promise we do receive– You will receive Power.”

There have been **many non-Pentecostals** who agree that the baptism with the Holy Spirit is a distinct second experience, but not necessarily accompanied by tongues. For example, A.J. Gordon (Founder of Gordon–Conwell Theological seminary), R. A. Torrey, Dwight L. Moody, Charles Finney (Founder of come forward invitations) , etc.

Piper gives three reasons why you may have not received the HS?

1) Not a believer.

2) It may be that for some reason there has been a delay or a blockage in the manifestation of God's power in your life, and you need to seek his fullness in prayer.

3) Or it may be that he is doing more in your life than you realize because you have never been taught how to recognize what is the work of God.

Piper asks, “Did You Receive the Holy Spirit When You Believed? Here are some evidences.”

He could say,

- Yes, I have seen the Spirit of obedience at work in my life subduing sin and inclining me to acts of love.
- Yes, I have seen the Spirit of praise in my life filling my heart and mouth with worship to Jesus and God the Father.

- Yes, I have seen the Spirit of courage at work in my life overcoming fear and giving me a will to risk things for the cause of Christ.
- And yes, even though I know that speaking in tongues and the gift of prophecy are no sure sign of God's grace, yet together with other evidences they too are a precious evidence that the power of God is on me.

- **View #5 – Kevin DeYoung’s View (My View)**

I agree with Art Azurdia (who I first heard through John Piper) that the Apostles get here as quickly as possible b/c this is an unusual experience. The adverb “not yet” speaks of mystery...something that should have happened, but hasn’t happened.

Peter had to be there for the second Pentecost. Later, when Peter recounts this event...the HS came on them as he came on us...who are we to think that we can stand in God’s way? When they heard this they had no further objection...even to Gentiles God has granted repentance.

J.D. Greear said God sent an event to validate the inclusion of the Samaritans.

These people had the mojo and they made the spirit come down? No. God delayed the gift of the HS so that Peter and John may see and authenticate that the Salvation came to the Samaritans.

JMAC – “Why didn’t they receive the HS like believers do now? B/C they needed apostolic evidence that they would be included in the ONE church. The Jews hated the Samaritans.”

Summary

Normally, the spirit comes with faith in the NT (Acts 2:38; 1 Cor. 12:3, 13), but there are special circumstances that break the pattern to underscore a fresh move of God. (Luke 11:13, Acts 5:32, 11:17, 15:8)

We believe you need the spirit TO believe. He baptizes you into Christ.

We believe this is descriptive and not prescriptive. Explain the difference....