

## **Baptism of the Holy Spirit**

To many the word baptism conjures up visions of water or spectacular displays of power. Neither is correct when speaking of the baptizing work of the Spirit. This is something entirely different from the ordinance of water baptism, and it is something which gives the Christian primarily a position and, only secondarily, power. Too, people often confuse baptism and the filling of the Spirit, but these are separate and distinct ministries of the Spirit. Some characteristics of the baptism of the Spirit are:

1. It is for all believers without exception. Again, it was to that carnal Corinthian church that Paul said all were baptized (1 Co. 12:13). Notice, too, that he did not exhort them to be baptized as the way out of their carnality.
2. It occurred for the first time on the day of Pentecost (for it was still future when the Lord spoke of it in Ac.1:5, and Peter referred to it happening first at Pentecost in Ac. 11:15, 16). Therefore, it is something distinct to this dispensation.
3. Apparently each believer is baptized only once (the tense of the verb in 1 Co .12:13 indicates an un repeated experience).
4. It joins believers to the body of Christ and sets up a relationship from which all kinds of power and experiences can flow (Ro. 6:1-10). However, the absence of unusual experiences does not indicate an un baptized position (otherwise one could be a believer and not be in the body of Christ!). The carnal Corinthians had been baptized. The baptized Galatians were turning away from the true gospel (Gal.1:6; 3:27). Many were baptized who did not speak in tongues (1 Co.12:13,30). To experience fully the benefits of the new position which the baptism gives us involves the filling of the Spirit as well. But the baptism is basic to all Christian growth and experience.

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