

## WHO RECEIVED THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN ACTS, CHAPTER TWO?

### Introduction:

It is vital to a proper understanding of the supernatural role of the Holy Spirit to determine *exactly* who received the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, as recorded in Acts 2. Some say the *120 disciples* gathered in the upper room of Acts 1:12-15 *all* received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and so were able to speak in various languages supernaturally and perform other miracles (See Acts 2:1-4). These people say that *all Christians* can and should seek this same power *today*. Others say that only *the twelve apostles* received that special power, and that it was not intended for all Christians throughout time. Which position does the Bible teach? Let us examine these two chapters *carefully* to see.

### I. DID ALL 120 DISCIPLES RECEIVE THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT?

- A. A key verse to consider is Acts 2:7. The large crowd of Jews, gathered in Jerusalem to observe the Day of Pentecost, recognized that *all* who were speaking in various languages supernaturally were *Galileans!* Galilee was over 60 miles north of Jerusalem, beyond the “outcast” province of Samaria, and in a completely different district of Palestine!
- B. Consider how difficult it would have been for anyone present on that day (most of them from foreign countries, Acts 2:5-11), to *accurately* determine the place of origin of *all 120 persons!* But the crowd asked a rhetorical question: “Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans?” The answer was obvious. Everyone knew that those speaking (who had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit) were *all* from Galilee (Acts 2:7).
- C. But how were they able to determine where these “speakers” (Acts 2:7) were from? A possible way of drawing such a conclusion was by listening to their *dialect*. (We are told that Galileans had difficulty in pronouncing guttural sounds; See *Commentary on the Book of Acts* by F.F. Bruce, p. 59). Later on Peter was recognized by his Galilean *accent* (See Matt. 26:73 with Mark 14:70)!
- D. If the 120 were the ones who received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, would that large of a group have *all* been Galileans? Consider the following disciples who were *not* Galileans and who were very likely among the 120 gathered in the upper room at Jerusalem (Acts 1:13-15).

(1) Mary, the mother of Mark, lived in Jerusalem....Acts 12:5, 12

(2) Nicodemus lived in Jerusalem....John 2:23 - 3:1-2

- (3) Simon the (former) leper lived in Bethany, which was a couple of miles east of Jerusalem....Matt. 26:6 (Mark 14:3)
  - (4) Mary, Martha and Lazarus also lived in Bethany...John 11:1
  - (5) Zaccheus lived at Jericho, about 17 miles NW of Jerusalem...Luke 19:1-5
  - (6) Joseph lived at Arimathea, about 20 miles NW of Jerusalem..Matt. 27:57; Lk.23:50-51
- E. Here are eight disciples of Jesus who were *not* from Galilee! They *all* lived *in* or *near* Jerusalem. Would they *all* have been *absent* on the day of Pentecost when the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit descended? Remember, the crowd said that *all* who spoke in the various languages supernaturally were from *Galilee*, over 60 miles away, where people spoke a different dialect. *Somehow* they knew that *none* of the speakers were from Jerusalem or its vicinity!
- F. So from the above strong evidence, we must conclude that the 120 disciples were *not* the ones on whom the baptism of the Holy Spirit descended (Acts 2:4).

## II. DID THE TWELVE APOSTLES RECEIVE THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT?

- A. The promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit was made *to the apostles*...Acts 1:1-5. Notice that the *apostles* were the ones “commanded” not to leave Jerusalem but to wait there for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Acts 1:4-5
- B. Those who were together on the day of Pentecost to receive this baptism of the Holy Spirit (as promised them, Acts 1:5, 8) were *Matthias and the eleven apostles* (Acts 1:26). These “twelve apostles” were the nearest antecedents to “*they* were all together in one place” (Acts 2:1).
- C. Follow the pronouns “they,” “them” and “these” throughout Acts 2:1-15. “They” (v. 1), “they” (v. 2), “them” (v. 3), “they” (v. 4), “them” (v. 6), “these” (v. 7), “them” (v. 11), “they” (v. 13), “these” (v. 15). It seems clear that all these references throughout the entire passage are to “Peter, taking his stand with the eleven” (Acts 2:14, NASB).
- D. The NASB, NIV, Amplified (plus other translations) understand the Greek pronoun of Acts 2:15 to mean “these *men*” were doing the speaking (See also 2:7 NIV). The apostles were all men, but it is not likely that *all 120* were men, especially since it specifically tells us that several women were among those assembled in the upper room (Acts 1:14-15).
- E. When some in the crowds *listened to Peter and the eleven speaking* (2:14), they were convicted of their need for Christ so *asked Peter and the apostles* what to do (Acts 2:37). After that they continued receiving “*the apostles’ teaching*” (Acts 2:42) and observed “many wonders and miraculous signs done *by the apostles*” (Acts 2:43).

J.W. McGarvey says, “All the apostles were from Galilee save Judas Iscariot” (*The Fourfold Gospel*, page 221). Alfred Edersheim says, “Thus the betrayer alone would be of Judean origin, the others all of Galilean...” (*The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Vol. 1, page 522).

**Conclusion:**

A careful reading of Acts, chapters 1 and 2 makes it overwhelmingly clear that it was *the twelve apostles* who received the *special supernatural powers* when they were baptized by the Holy Spirit and *not the 120 disciples*. Of course, all who were baptized into Christ (water baptism) received the Holy Spirit to indwell them, but there is no indication that this power enabled them to perform miracles (see Acts 2:38).