

At The Moment Of Salvation by Dr Robert Jeffress

It will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind. –Joel 2:28

Some people argue with the idea that every Christian receives the Holy Spirit at the moment of their salvation. Let's look at the passages they point to, starting with the first instance in Scripture of the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:1-4 says, "When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind. . . . And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit."

The Old Testament prophesied that believers would one day receive the Holy Spirit. The Gospel writers looked forward to it. John the Baptist prophesied it. Jesus Himself said the Holy Spirit would come at some future point: "If I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you" (John 16:7). Until Acts 2, nobody experienced the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit. But they knew it was coming one day, and that was the day of Pentecost.

The second passage people point to is Acts 8:14-17: "When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit."

The Samaritans hated the Jews, and the Jews hated the Samaritans. So how was God going to bridge the gap between these two groups? In this exceptional case, God delayed the coming of the Holy Spirit until the Jewish Christian leaders could see that these Samaritans had been saved. And when Peter and John had laid hands on them and brought them the gift of the Holy Spirit, it had a unifying effect. The Holy Spirit was delayed to bring unity in the body of Christ.

There is one final instance that could suggest the Holy Spirit's coming is not concurrent with salvation. In Acts 19, Paul met some men who appeared to be Christians, and he asked, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" (v. 2). But they had not even heard of the Holy Spirit. So Paul asked, "Into what then were you baptized?" (v. 3). It turns out they were followers of John the Baptist—they were not true believers. Once Paul explained the gospel to them and they were saved, verses 5-6 say they received the Holy Spirit. From Acts 8 until today, the pattern is clear: when you truly trust in Christ as your Savior, you are immediately baptized with the Holy Spirit of God.