

## *Comments on Acts 1:4-5*

by

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*And when He had assembled them, He commanded them to not depart from Jerusalem, but to await the promise of the Father, which “you heard from Me, because indeed John baptized with water, but you will be baptized by the Holy Spirit after not so many days.”*

The Lord assembled the disciples. The situation is specific. All at one time the commandment was made; it was not presented piecemeal. This statement indicates the importance of the statement following.

It was necessary for them to all be together in Jerusalem at the coming of the Spirit. The force of the event would have been dissipated if they had dispersed. Indeed, not of the important events of Chapter 2 could have occurred without the disciples remaining in Jerusalem. The Jewish setting of the city is important.

The phrase, “to await the promise of the Father” is an allusion to the events of John 14:16-17. “The promise of the Father” probably means “The promise I made to you to ask the Father.” The promise is the *coming* of the Holy Spirit to be resident on the earth, not to His baptism, which Jesus did not mention in the upper room. No household change is inherent in the coming of the Spirit. That coming must be accompanied by the baptism of the Spirit in order to make the household change actual.

“Because indeed John baptized with water” is the first statement in an important distinction that is being made. John’s water baptism will be seen to inferior to the baptism of the Spirit, not because of the element into which individuals were baptized, but because of **who** is doing the baptism. *In other words, the distinction here is not between water and the Holy Spirit, but between John and the Holy Spirit.* The importance of an act of baptism is based not on simply what one is being baptized into, but who is doing the baptism.

The best translation is “you shall be baptized by the Holy Spirit.” This statement, which is confused in traditional translations, refers not to being baptized into the Holy Spirit, but to the Holy Spirit baptizing the disciples. The element into which the disciples will be baptized (the body of Christ, 1 Corinthians 12:13) is not mentioned because the body was a mystery, and as yet was not yet revealed. Indeed, as we shall see, the *revelation* of the body follows the *beginning* of the body by some years.

The significance of this prediction is key to a correct understanding of the book of Acts. It tells us that Luke’s selective history has *doctrinal purposes*. This statement was chosen carefully by Luke to color the rest of his presentation. He is telling us that momentous doctrinal/theological events are recorded in his narrative. *In accordance with his historical approach he makes no comment of his own, but simply presents a historical event in its context.* This study will consider the importance of this prediction in more detail as it discusses the events of Acts 2 and the statements of Peter in Acts 11 concerning why he went into a Gentile family and gave them the truth about the Lord Jesus Christ.

What is the “baptism by the Holy Spirit?” Is it for power, as some believe? Or does it have another purpose? The answer to these questions is found in comparing *this statement* with the statement in 1 Corinthians 12:13 where we read, “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free....” Note that the Holy Spirit does the baptizing. Baptism is the act of placing an individual permanently into some element. Here the element is the “body” which is Paul’s terminology for the church universal (see Ephesians 1:22, 23). As we will see, this prediction was fulfilled in Acts 2, though, since it is not an historical event, it is not recorded by Luke. We must wait until a doctrinal authority, namely Peter, identifies this act as happening on the day of Pentecost before we can identify it in Acts 2. This will take place in conjunction with Peter’s ministry to Cornelius in Acts 10 and 11 (q.v.). Note the following chart:

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	<b>Real Baptism</b>	<b>Ritual Baptism</b>
<b>Element:</b>	Into the Body of Christ	Into water
<b>Baptizer:</b>	The Holy Spirit	A Human Being
<b>Significance:</b>	Identification with the Person and work of Christ.	Identification with a movement or change in the life of the one being baptized.
<b>Number:</b>	Only one during the present dispensation. (During the 70 <sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel the Lord Jesus will perform a baptism into the Holy Spirit and into fire-Matthew 3:11.)	More than one: John's baptism unto repentance (also performed by the disciples of Jesus during the gospels); early Christian baptism as a sign to the Jews that Gentiles were being included in the body.