

Inclusion of the Gentiles Acts 10:44-48

Back in 2002, *Word for Today* told the story about the spoiled son of a very wealthy Christian. The father tried to give his son Gospel focus, but his son seemed to be driven primarily by materialism. And there seemed to be a bitterness there that the father felt helpless to do anything about. He wanted to connect with his son, and just didn't seem to be able to do so. He knew his son wanted a sports car for a graduation present, and he wrestled with what to give him. Finally, he called his son into his office, told him that he loved him and handed him a wrapped up present. When the young man opened the present, he found a box containing a leather bound Bible with his name inscribed on the spine. He angrily threw the box on his father's desk and stormed out, saying: "With all your money, all you can give me is a Bible!" And he never spoke to his dad again, even though his dad repeatedly tried to contact him.

Years later, the son got a call that his father had died and left all his inheritance to him. And as he was going through his father's belongings, he noticed the present he had been given lying on the desk still in its box. Feeling guilty, he took the Bible out of its box and opened it up. The page fell open to a passage that his father had underlined. It was Matthew 7:11. **If you then being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father give what is good to those who ask Him.** The page was bookmarked with a key. ON the key was a tag with a dealer's name on it. It was a key for the sports car that he had wanted years earlier. On the other side of the key tag beside his graduation date were the words, "Paid in full. Love Dad." Well, it broke the kids heart and he never got over that experience. He had been so preoccupied with the desire for a gift that he had ignored the love of the giver. (Saturday, September 7, 2002 edition)

In effect the father had been trying to tell his son, "I want you to enjoy the good gifts of life, but I want you to especially value God who is the ultimate Giver. I want you to have perspective." Well, it didn't work in his case. But as we approach this passage, I want you to evaluate who your chief treasure is.

In this passage we are going to see that the pearl of great price is Jesus Christ. If we have Jesus, we have everything else. As Romans 8:32 words it, **He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?** "With Him." The greatest gift is Jesus, and with Jesus, the Father gives us all things. Peter had just finished telling this family about the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And it was

as soon as they believed the Words of verse 43 – the need to believe in Jesus, that they received the Holy Spirit, and with the Holy Spirit, other gifts as well. And so I want to look at the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and try to put it into context. The first point is the context of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, because the context shows us how freely and generously God loves.

I. Context of the Baptism of the Spirit

A. ***What it was not – They were not meeting Pentecostal “conditions” for baptism.***¹

There is a tendency in Christian circles to think that we have to earn God’s good gifts. We know that we cannot earn it at the time of salvation, but we fall into the same trap after we get saved. We think, "The reason I am dry and powerless is because I haven’t tried hard." Glenn A. Reed says, “Unless they meet certain definite conditions and definitely seek to be filled” they cannot have the baptism. Let me give you quotes from Pentecostals of some of the conditions that they say we must supply before we can be baptized and filled with the Spirit. And we are going to be seeing that they are quite foreign to this passage.

1. No “emptying oneself of all sin”²

Over and over I read in the Pentecostal literature the phrase that we must empty ourselves of all sin. Charles W. Conn says, “you can receive the Holy Spirit, but not with sin in your heart... the Holy Spirit and sin cannot abide in the same heart.” The question that I would pose is this: “How can we be cleansed from sin apart from the work of the Holy Spirit. 1 Peter 1:22 says, “**you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit.**” In other words, the Spirit works the purifying of our souls and willing obedience. It’s not a condition for receiving the Spirit. Look at Acts 15:8-11. This is Peter’s testimony of this remarkable event. Peter says, **So**

¹ Reed says, “unless they meet certain definite conditions and definitely seek to be filled” the baptism of the Spirit will not occur. (*Pentecostal Truths*, p. 22)

² Conn says, “you can receive the Holy Spirit, but not with sin in your heart... the Holy Spirit and sin cannot abide in the same heart.” (*Pillars*, p. 96). “A controversy with God about the smallest thing is sufficient to shut one out of the blessing.” (Torrey, *The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit*, p. 218.) Ironically, this leads these various types of perfectionists to minimize sin: “It is only Christians who regard faults, mistakes, temptations, lack of knowledge, and so on, as sin, who believe that Christians cannot live without sin” (J Gilchrist Lawson, *Deeper Experiences*, p. xi).

God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they.”

The same faith that saves us is a faith that receives the Spirit. And yet, as clear as Scripture is on this, even a careful writer like R. A Torrey can say, “A controversy with God about the smallest thing is sufficient to shut one out of the blessing.” This leaves people falling into one of two extremes: either 1) giving up and becoming cynical about the power and presence of the Spirit in our lives or 2) lowering the standard of holiness so that we can fake it. We saw last week that holiness is not an option – but neither is holiness a condition. It flows out of God’s grace by the power of the Holy Spirit.

2. No “intensive and persevering prayer” meeting³

Another condition that they give is that we must engage in long, intensive and persevering prayer. But the coming of the Holy Spirit in this passage doesn’t come in the midst of a prayer meeting at all. Now God *can* give the baptism right in the midst of a prayer meeting if He wants to – and He does do that in Acts chapter 2. But this giving of the Holy Spirit occurred in the midst of a sermon when they were listening. Or as verse 44 says, **the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word.** Now contrast that with the conditions laid out by Pentecostals. Ralph Riggs says, the Spirit does not come “when asked once.” No, “we must ask importunately.” Without intense persevering prayer, you won’t be ushered into this promised land, what they claim.

3. No emotionally charged “tarrying meeting” with coaches to help people “yield” their tongues to speak.

And this is why their prayer meetings are sometimes such emotionally charged events. I have been to a number of these so-called “tarrying meetings” where there is real pressure for a person to get through and to speak in tongues. They have coaches who try to get you to a psychological state where you are able to speak in tongues, and as soon as you make the

³ Riggs for example denies that the Spirit is ever given simply “when asked once.” Instead, he claims that “we must ask importunately.” *Ibid.*, p. 104). Persevering prayer is said to be “God’s elimination test” (p. 110).

right sounds, they say that you are baptized in the Spirit. But this meeting of Cornelius and his household doesn't look even remotely like a tarrying meeting. There aren't any coaches to push you through. Instead, verse 45 says that the Jews were astonished that they got the Holy Spirit. They weren't expecting a thing.

4. No physical and emotional yieldedness (passivity)⁴

Notice too that there is no physical or emotional passivity (or what they call "yieldedness.") That is an emotional state that is induced in a similar way to hypnotism, though technically it uses different techniques. But it is very similar to the loss of control found in hypnotism. And in your outline I give you a sample quote of how they try to get you to yield every muscle, every thought, and every emotion to God. And I'm all for yieldedness. Every square inch of my being should be yielded and surrendered to God. But yieldedness is not a passive state of consciousness in the Bible where you are easily manipulated. Instead, it is very active. It is a willingness to be out and out for Jesus. It is characterized by the word for meekness that does not mean being a doormat. The word "meek" is a Greek word that is used to describe a wild stallion that has been tamed to use its power for the master, but is very active. A meek stallion is very active and very strong. So it's not a doormat kind of yieldedness where we are so passive that we can be manipulated by those around us.

5. No second level of faith.⁵

Notice too that this is not a second level of faith. We have already seen from 11:14 that this would be the first level of faith – salvation. And it was at the first level of faith that the Spirit was given. Chapter 15:8-9 says the same thing. They were saved at this meeting. The faith they exercised at this point was exercised by believing the Gospel message preached by Peter.

⁴ "Body, soul, and spirit must be yielded. Our physical bodies must be pliable under His power... utter and complete baptism in the Holy Spirit... is reached only when there is a perfect yielding of the entire being to Him and one's tongue is surrendered to the control of the blessed Holy Spirit." (Riggs, *Spirit Himself*, p. 67).

⁵ Gordon says, "...just as there is a 'faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ' for salvation, there is a faith toward the Holy Ghost for power and consecration" (*Ministry of the Holy Spirit*, p. 71). This second faith is said to be quite different: "The difference between ordinary Christian faith and Pentecostal faith, then, is that the former is confessed lack and the latter is attempted totality. The former is simple and all too shallow; the latter is complex and deep. The former confesses bankruptcy; the latter costs. The former is despair of all effort; the latter is superhuman effort." (Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit*, p. 111.)

Verse 44 says that it was **while Peter was still speaking these words...** Yet Pentecostals insists that this is always a second work of grace in a believer's life. A. J. Gordon said, "...just as there is a 'faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ' for salvation, there is a faith toward the Holy Ghost for power and consecration" (*Ministry of the Holy Spirit*, p. 71). And they make those two faiths quite different. But here, we see that it was a faith in the Gospel. Faith is always founded on a Scripture. And the Scripture they were hearing was the Gospel. You will search in vain in Peter's Gospel message for any words promising a second level of ministry. The Words are Gospel words.

6. No laying on of hands.⁶

The third thing that we see is that there was no laying on of hands by the apostles. Now, I am not knocking the laying on of hands. Hebrews 6:2 lists it as one of the foundations of the Christian faith. So we should not reject the laying on of hands as being unbiblical. We practice it at every ordination. But Pentecostals frequently go too far. For example, Hein Kuipers says, "Without the laying on of hands and the receiving of the Spirit we are not a partaker of the Spirit and thus we have no 'oil in our lamps'." Others insist that the Spirit can only be received with those who have a gift of laying on of hands. But there is no mention of hands in this passage. They received the Spirit as a group, all at the same time, while listening to the message.

7. No manipulative words or actions to induce a psychological state (see vv 34-43)

If you examine Peter's message in verses 34-43 you will see that there were no manipulative words or actions to induce a psychological state. It was a sovereign move of God. He gives when it pleases Him.

⁶ "Without the laying on of hands and the receiving of the Spirit we are not a partaker of the Spirit and thus we have no 'oil in our lamps'." (Hein Kuipers, *The Laying on of Hands*) Nor is it only Charismatics who believe this. Bishop Theophan the Recluse (Orthodox Church) said, "without the laying on of hands of the Apostles, the Holy Spirit has never descended and never will descend."

8. No water baptism immediately before the giving of the Spirit.⁷

There is one last group that I need to mention that this passage addresses, and that is the people who believe that water baptism regenerates people. We do not believe that. Roman Catholics, Greek Orthodox, High Anglicans and most Lutherans believe that people are regenerated at the moment of water baptism – that water baptism confers regeneration and Spirit baptism. And interestingly, there are even an increasing number of Baptists who believe this, and I give you a sample quote in your outlines. When I took a course at Northwest Baptist Theological Seminary, I got into arguments with several students who had been convinced of baptismal regeneration. I was shocked. I had no idea that Baptists would buy into that. But I came to realize that they were *forced* to baptismal regeneration because they insisted that Romans 6 is talking about water baptism. Well, you won't find a drop of water in Romans 6. I think it is referring to Spirit baptism. But Romans 6 is their main proof text for what they think water baptism symbolizes. Romans 6 says that those who have been baptized into Christ died with Christ, were buried with Him and were raised with Him. They say that baptism symbolizes that beautifully because it represents the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. The trouble is, that passage doesn't show what water baptism symbolizes. It shows what Spirit baptism actually accomplishes. We believe that water baptism symbolizes the baptism of the Spirit, which in verse 44 fell upon them and in verse 45 was poured out upon them. So that's where the true symbolism of water lies. But, in order to maintain their immersionist theology, many Baptists have been forced to say that you can't separate water baptism from Spirit baptism, and therefore both are present in Romans 6, and therefore water baptism regenerates us. It's sad to see the degree to which our theology can blind us.

But the simple answer to Baptismal regeneration is this passage. They are baptized in the Spirit *before* they are baptized with water. Nothing could be clearer. The baptism of the Spirit comes first in verses 44-45, then after they speak for a while, they are baptized in water in verse 48. The clear

⁷ Baptist writer, Beasley-Murray writes, "Because of this association of baptism with the work of the Spirit, baptism in the New Testament is the true context for regeneration.... Baptism is spoken of [in Titus 3:5ff] as 'the washing characterized by the regeneration and renewal wrought by the Holy Spirit'... As we pointed out, this passage is even more unambiguous than the more famous Jn. 3:5, which speaks of the necessity to be born 'by water and Spirit' if a man would enter the Kingdom of God.... Baptism is thus represented as the occasion when the Spirit brings to new life him that believes in the Son of Man." (*Baptism*, pp 277-278).

implication is that Spirit baptism didn't flow out of water baptism here. They were separated. They were distinct.

And all of these additions to the Gospel are ways by which man seeks to circumvent the cross of Christ. The focus is not on Christ, the Incarnate Word. In fact, just as that teenager threw the boxed Bible on the table because his only interest was the sports car, the Incarnate Word is often treated as nice for salvation, but unimportant for the rest of life. The boxed book is not considered to be the real gift; it's the shiny Porsche – the exciting spiritual gifts.

And in our hunt for the spiritual keys to the spiritual car, we can easily ignore the Word Incarnate in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2:3); in whom are hidden every spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3); from whom every spiritual gift flows (Romans 12); in whom we are sealed with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13); in whom we have boldness and access to the throne room of heaven (Eph. 3:12). It is not until we open the “book” of Jesus by simple faith that the keys fall out and we have our “spiritual Porsche.” It's through Christ.

B. What the true context was – they simply believed the message that was being preached

1. The Spirit fell

Look at the context for when the Spirit came and the gifts were given. Verse 44 says, **while Peter was still speaking these Words**

a) while the Gospel was being preached (v. 44)

(1) The Words of the Gospel (vv. 34-43)

Which words were they? They were the words of the Gospel in verses 34-43.

(2) And more specifically, the words of forgiveness through faith in Jesus (v. 43)

But more specifically, it was at the point that the words in verse 43 were being spoken: **To Him all the prophets witness that, through his name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins.** There wasn't a lot of time for them to process those words and get saved. But their mind instantly connected with the message and they instantly received the Spirit.

b) at the point of salvation (11:14)

Chapter 11:14 says that Cornelius' family was saved when they heard these words.

c) because they received Christ by faith (Acts 15:8-9,11)

Acts 15:8-9 indicates that they were regenerated, their hearts were purified and they professed faith at that time. It all happened instantaneously as the Lord took off the veil and opened the eyes of their understanding through the preaching of the Word. Could you ask for anything simpler? They didn't earn the Spirit, they received the Spirit; they didn't take the Spirit, they received the Spirit. It was monergistic grace. Monergistic means that the action is with God alone.

d) All instantaneously.

2. The Spirit fell when no one else was expecting anything to happen (v. 45)

Verse 45 strengthens our thesis that there were no conditions, because the Jews certainly didn't put any expectations upon the Gentiles. They didn't know what to expect. And verse 45 says, **And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.** They were astonished. They couldn't conceive of the Gentiles receiving the Spirit. The Gentiles didn't deserve Him. But that's the whole point isn't it? None of us do. Spirit Baptism is not earned. So that is the context.

3. Water baptism came afterwards (v. 48).

II. The Baptism of the Spirit

A. Happened at their conversion (v. 44) and thus was an initiation into the work of the Spirit

And I think that the Baptism of the Spirit is such a wonderful picture of this salvation by grace. Let's look at the baptism itself (point number II). First of all, it came (as we have already seen) at the moment of their conversion.

1. Baptism = initiation into some change of state

In fact, the word baptism means an initiation. It's an initiation into some change of state. If you want a four-volume set that defines this term by

examining every occurrence of *baptizo* in the secular and religious Greek, I have a copy of James W. Dale's set of books. It's boring, but thorough. And I think it is clear that Baptism means an initiation into some change of status, or being or state. And so it may be helpful for you to see how Acts distinguishes between the Baptism of the Spirit and the fillings of the Spirit. People many times get those two confused. And for a couple of years, I was pretty confused about it. But the word "baptism" helps to solve that question. It is always an initiation; it's not a continuing activity. You don't get baptized into the same thing over and over again. You get *filled* over and over, but not baptized. Scripture says there is "one baptism" (Eph. 4:5).

2. Baptism into the Spirit is the first or beginning work of power in our lives and "filling with the Spirit" are all subsequent empowerings.

For example, in Acts 2, on the day of Pentecost, both baptism of the Spirit and filling of the Spirit happen to the apostles in Acts 2. But they are never again said to be baptized by the Spirit. Every time the Holy Spirit falls upon them for empowering after that it is said to be a "filling." And so in Acts 4:31 the apostles are gathered for another prayer meeting, and it says, **when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.** This was not a second baptism, but it was a second filling. And we need to have second, and third and fourth and fifth fillings. Ephesians 5:18 uses the Greek present tense to indicate that we need to keep on getting filled with the Holy Spirit. And so while theologians argue about when baptism takes place, everyone is agreed that we need to continually be seeking the Holy Spirit for His filling. We need Him for our empowering.

3. IN the NT this baptism happened

a) After conversion for those converted before Pentecost (Acts 1:5)

But when does this first filling occur? When does this Baptism that initiates people into the kingdom occur? Some theologians emphasize Acts 1:5 and say that baptism can occur long after conversion. Well it did with the apostles there because they were in a transition between Old Testament and the New Testament Kingdom. There wasn't any other way of making that transition. They couldn't get regenerated again, so when the Spirit empowers

them for the Great Commission and for kingdom living, He calls it a baptism. Why? It was their initiation into this new state.

b) At the time of conversion (Acts 2:38; 10:47)

But if you look at anyone who was converted after Pentecost, their baptism in the Spirit occurs at the point of conversion. And Acts 10:47 would be one example.

c) But from that point on, baptism of the Spirit happens at the point of union with Jesus and actually produces this union with Christ and all of His benefits (Gal. 3:27; 1 Cor. 12:13; Rom. 6:1-14).

Others say that it can even occur in the womb. But in one sense it really doesn't matter. You can't have the filling without the baptism, and if you are being filled with the Spirit, you have been baptized already.

I've listed three verses in your outline that prove that Spirit baptism always happens at the time of regeneration or union with Christ. Galatians 3:27 says, **For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.** Romans 6:1-14 says that Spirit baptism unites us to Jesus and enables us to begin enjoying all of the benefits that Jesus purchased for us. He's the book, and as we open the pages, the keys of life begin to fall out. If you are regenerated and are not finding power for living, it is because you have left the book on the tabletop. Everything that we need for life and godliness is provided in that book of the Lord Jesus Christ. So the first thing that we see about this Baptism is that it is the first filling. It is the initiation into kingdom living.

B. It was monergistic - God alone acting upon man (v. 44,45 – "fell upon" "poured out")

The second thing that we see is that this baptism is monergistic. That's a ten-dollar word that's made up of two words: mono (or one) and the Greek word *ergos* or working. So it means "one working." It means that man is passive and God alone is active. God does not baptize by immersion where the Spirit is passive and the man is active in going down into the Spirit can coming back up out of the Spirit. No, the activity is all with the Holy Spirit. Consistently in the book of Acts the baptism of the Spirit was by pouring. In verse 44 **the Holy Spirit fell upon all those...** God's the one who takes the initiative. The movement is with the Holy Spirit, not with these men, women and children. In verse 45 it says, **the Holy Spirit had**

been poured out... So this baptism was monergistic. It is God's action, not ours.

Now just to anticipate point III, our water baptism should symbolize God's Spirit baptism, shouldn't it? John the Baptist said that his water baptism symbolized the coming Spirit baptism. If God baptizes by pouring, then so should we? Now, I was immersed. We accept immersion, but we believe that both the Old and the New Testaments consistently called for baptism by pouring or sprinkling. In fact, every Old Testament prophecy of Pentecost calls the coming of the Holy Spirit either a pouring out or a sprinkling upon the people. God starts the ball of spiritual life rolling by giving us the Spirit baptism without asking our permission. And instantaneously there is an empowering for service that happens. Spirit Baptism starts the empowering for kingdom living. Fillings continue that empowering.

C. It empowered them to glorify God (v. 46)

Look at *how* it empowered these men, women and children. It's remarkable. Verse 46 says, **For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.** It's not the natural impulse of the human heart to magnify God. Like that spoiled teenager that I started this sermon with, our natural impulse is to only think about ourselves. We don't tend to care if we hurt other people's feelings, so long as our own feelings are not hurt. And so much pursuit of spiritual gifts is self-absorbed, and so much worship is self-absorbed. We want everything to make *us* happy. But an odd thing happens when the Spirit comes upon us. Yes, He does make us happy as a side fruit, but He doesn't have us focus on that. When the Spirit comes upon us we lose sight of our own importance and begin to think of the greatness of Father and Son. Why? Because Jesus said that the Spirit's role and passion is to glorify the Son, and through the Son to glorify the Father. He enables us to do what our natural flesh cannot.

1. By the Gifts of the Spirit (v. 46a)

And this verse mentions two things that were supernatural. There was the supernatural gift of tongues – the ability to speak other human languages, and secondly, there was a supernatural giving of humility and God-centeredness. The first relates to the *Gifts* of the Spirit and the second relates to the *fruit* of the Spirit.

a) Note that tongues is not given to all people (1 Cor. 12:30), nor was it present at every baptism of the Spirit (Acts 3:18-19; 8:17,37-38; 9:17-18).

Now there has been a lot of controversy in the church over whether tongues is always a sign of the baptism of the Spirit. Here it was. It was. As soon as the Spirit baptizes and fills a person, He begins to work. There will be evidence of gifts. But it is a big mistake to say that tongues is always the sign of baptism. For example, there were no tongues when Jesus was baptized, and yet He was empowered according to Luke. In Acts 3:18-19 there are people converted, but no tongues mentioned. In Acts 4 there is filling of the Spirit, but no tongues. IN Acts 8:17 there was baptism but no tongues. In Acts 8:37-38 the Ethiopian Eunuch did not speak in tongues. Nor did Paul in Acts 9:17-18. The Pentecostal doctrine that says you are not baptized until you speak in tongues is false.

b) However, every person who has been converted and baptized in the Spirit is given some Spiritual gift (1 Pet. 4:10; 1 Cor. 12:7,11; Rom. 12:3; Eph. 4:7)

However, we can safely say that everyone who has been regenerated and baptized by the Spirit has been given a spiritual gift. Everyone. The moment we are regenerated into the kingdom, we are empowered for the kingdom. 1 Peter 4:10 says, **As *each one* has received a gift...** 1 Corinthians 12:7 says, **But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to *each one* for the profit of all...** Verse 11 says, **But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to *each one* individually as He wills.** God sovereignly distributes whatever gifts He wants to give, but He does give them to every believer. There is no class system in the church where some have gifts and are important and others do not have gifts. Each one is gifted in a different way for the advancement of the kingdom *from the moment that he was regenerated and baptized in the Spirit.* Every one of you is gifted and you need to glorify God with your gifts.

2. By the Fruit of the Spirit (v. 46b)

But while gifts are important, the fruit of the Spirit is also important. And it is not just God-centeredness that the Spirit immediately begins to work in regenerate people. He also begins to impart peace, joy, love, patience and many other graces.

D. *It was an identical baptism to the apostles', though it had a different context (v. 47).*

And so we can say that what Cornelius received was exactly the same thing that the apostles received on Pentecost without falling into Pentecostal errors. Verse 47 says, **Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?** Note the word “just.” It was “just” like what the apostles received. Till the time of the Second Coming, we have the enormous privilege of the Spirit of God ushering us into incredible kingdom power through His gifts and through His graces. Let us value Christ by opening His book and receiving the chief key of the Holy Spirit every day. You should start every day by praying for a fresh infilling of the Spirit who ushered you into the kingdom.

III. The Physical Sign of the Spirit Baptism

A. *The movement is with the water (v. 47a)*

I don't need to say much about the sign of Spirit baptism. But let me quickly make four points. First, just as Spirit baptism is monergistic, with only one person acting, water baptism is monergistic as well. All the recipient does is to receive the water. The Greek word for “forbid” in verse 47 is “hold back.” It literally can be translated, “Can anyone hold back water...” The movement is with the water being brought to the person, symbolizing the fact that we are saved and empowered by grace alone. It's monergistic.

B. *Water baptism symbolizes Spirit baptism (v. 47b)*

Second, the water baptism clearly symbolizes the Spirit baptism, not our death, burial and resurrection. **Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?** And you will find this symbolic connection between the two throughout Acts. What you believe water baptism symbolizes will determine your mode. If you believe that it symbolizes the baptism of the Spirit, you will pour. If you believe it symbolizes the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, you will immerse.

C. *It was done under authority (v. 48)*

Third, this baptism was done under authority. Cornelius does not take it upon himself to baptize or be baptized. This is done under church authority, not family authority. Verse 48 says, **And he** [that is, Peter]

commanded them [there's the authority] to be baptized in the name of the Lord.

D. It was done in the one "name" of the Triune God (v. 48)

And that last phrase has caused some concern. There is a group of non-Trinitarian Pentecostals who have claimed that we do not baptize rightly because we baptize in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. And here it says that we are to baptize in the name of the Lord (just one Person). And they say that this one Person is the Lord Jesus. And they actually do have some good Scriptures. Some of you have friends who are "Jesus only" Pentecostals, so let's read some of their passages that they would typically give to you.

Acts 2:38 ¶ Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. They say, this clearly shows that we should baptize in the name of Jesus, not in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Look next at Acts 8:16.

Acts 8:16 For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. They say, "See? The Trinity is not there." Their last proof text is Acts 19:5.

Acts 19:5 ¶ When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

So how do we reconcile that with the Great Commission where Jesus commanded us, **Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit?** That's a clear command, not just a historical example like the Acts passages. Well, the "Jesus Only" Pentecostals say that Matthew 28 is a forgery and doesn't belong in the Bible. Well, very convenient, but there is no evidence for that.

The answer is really quiet simple. The answer is that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit all have the same name. The name is "Jehovah" or as scholars pronounce it, "Yahweh." Zechariah 14:9 says, **The LORD [Jehovah] is one and His name one.** In my sermon on the Trinity we read Old Testament passages where three divine Persons are talking with each other, and each of them are called Jehovah. For example, in Isaiah 48:16 we find Jehovah saying, **Jehovah God and His Spirit have sent Me.** A Person called Jehovah is being sent by Jehovah God and His Spirit. In Isaiah 44:6-7 you have Jehovah anointing Jehovah." That is a prediction of the anointing of Jesus by the Holy Spirit. So in a real sense, Jehovah anoints

Jehovah with Jehovah. So there are not three Gods. There is one God, one Lord and one name that is worn by three Persons. And by the way, the name “Jesus” means, “Jehovah Saves.” So there really is no contradiction: three Persons, one name.

But as I end this sermon, I want to urge you to do three things:

First, thank God that He has given you the book of Jesus Christ, and pursue Christ with your whole heart. Don't insult your Father by leaving the book on the desk and insisting that you want something better than Christ. Value Him as your chiefest treasure; as your pearl of great price.

Second, thank God for having initiated you into His kingdom privileges by the Holy Spirit. This was something that Old Testament saints wished they could have experienced. The Holy Spirit is the first and most important key that has been bookmarked into the gift of Jesus. Value Him.

Third, now that you have been initiated by the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, don't quit. Now that you've been baptized, don't stop being filled. Don't put the book down and ignore the keys that are book marking your blessings. There are many keys that are destined to fall out of the pages of the book of Jesus Christ into your lap. Every day be filled with the Spirit and He will usher you into those blessings.

Amen. Let's pray.

Brothers and sisters, value the gift of Jesus Christ, receive of His Spirit daily, and let the keys of His blessings fall into your lap as you make it your goal to please Him.