

FOUR BAPTISMS—NOW JUST ONE (2)

BY KEITH GREER

Baptism of Fire. Nature: *“In flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.” {2 Thessalonians 1:8,9}* This is a baptism of warning and doom. Preachers need to warn people to AVOID this baptism!

Subjects: *“But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.” {Revelation 21:8}* This is a place prepared for the “devil and his angels.” This baptism will be administered to the disobedient and unbelievers.

Duration: *“Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.’” {Matthew 25:41}* Sadly, the last words heard will be “**depart from Me.**” This is a place of eternal punishment.

Purpose and Design: *“The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.” {Revelation 20:10}* Nothing about this baptism is appealing or desirable. One would not bow before God and ask Him to send it upon them.

Baptism of Holy Spirit. Administrator: *“John answered, saying to all, ‘I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.’” {Luke 3:16}* *“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. {John 14:26}* God and His Son administered this baptism. The Holy Spirit came at Christ’s request.

Element: *“And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.” {Genesis 1:2}* The Holy Spirit is the element; and He is part of the eternal Godhead {Colossians 2:9}.

Nature: “Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.” {2 Corinthians 5:20} The Spirit fell on the apostles, allowing them to finish the work for which Christ prepared them while He was with them.

Subjects: “But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.” {John 15:26,27} Christ promised the Spirit to the apostles—and only to the apostles. Some seek to expand this promise to make it apply to all believers. The context shows that Holy Spirit baptism was promised to a special group.

Duration: “Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” {Acts 2:3,4} When the apostles received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, they began to preach the gospel message, a universal message of salvation.

Purpose and Design: “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” {Acts 1:8} The Lord's promise of John 14-16, was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost. The Spirit guided the apostles to teach the truth {1 Peter 1:25}.

We have examined the first three baptisms. Next article, we will examine the **fourth** to see if it's the one Paul mentioned in *Ephesians 4:5*—the ONE for now! ***