

## **Part Six: WHAT IS THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT?**

### Introduction:

1. A text that is the subject of much controversy is Acts 2:38, "...and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."
  - a. Some say this is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Our previous studies rule that out.
  - b. Others say it has to do with spiritual gifts. Earlier lessons have addressed that also.
  - c. The question that must be answered is this: Is the gift of the Holy Spirit to be understood as a gift from the Spirit, or is it the Spirit Himself as the gift?
2. A second question that we will address also involves something received: the earnest of the Spirit, Ephesians 1:13-14.

### The Lesson:

#### **I. The gift of the Holy Spirit is the salvation promised by the prophets.**

- A. It is easy to make assumptions about Acts 2:38 that are unwarranted.
  1. "The Holy Spirit Himself is the gift." Though that is possible, to merely make the assertion does not prove anything.
  2. "The grammar proves the gift is..." The Greek (and English) text would allow for either position. It could be the Spirit as the gift; it could be a gift from the Spirit.
  3. "The gift of the Holy Ghost in Acts 10:45 involved speaking in tongues. It must be the same thing here." Though that is possible, must a word or phrase always have the same meaning, though used in different contexts? Doesn't "like gift" in Acts 11:17 indicate that different gifts could be given? Note the difference in meaning in the texts below, though "gift of God" is used in each. Identify the meaning in each case.
    - a. Ecclesiastes 3:13. The "gift of God" is \_\_\_\_\_.
    - b. John 4:10. The "gift of God" is \_\_\_\_\_.
    - c. Romans 6:23. The "gift of God" is \_\_\_\_\_.
    - d. 1 Corinthians 7:7. The "gift of God" is \_\_\_\_\_.
    - e. Ephesians 2:8. The "gift of God" is \_\_\_\_\_.
    - f. In which of these texts was God Himself personally the gift? \_\_\_\_\_
    - g. If God was not the gift in these cases, why must the Holy Spirit be the gift in other cases?
- B. A study of the context of Acts 2:38 will help us to identify the "gift of the Holy Spirit."
  1. Peter's sermon centers on the fulfillment of the prophecy from Joel 2:28-32. See Acts 2:16-21.
    - a. The key verse is Acts 2:21, "...whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be **saved**." This is Peter's subject. This is what he sets out to proclaim.
    - b. Who is the Lord upon whom they must call? Acts 2:22-24. \_\_\_\_\_
    - c. Of whom did David speak in prophecy? Acts 2:25-29. \_\_\_\_\_
    - d. What promise was made to David? Acts 2:30. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
    - e. For what purpose was Jesus raised from the dead? Acts 2:30-33. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- f. When Jesus ascended into heaven, He received the "promise of the Holy Spirit," Acts 2:33. What did He receive? Did He receive the Holy Spirit? \_\_\_\_\_
- g. Who is ascended into heaven and reigns there? Acts 2:34-36. \_\_\_\_\_
- h. What evidence had been offered as proof of this? Acts 2:33b. \_\_\_\_\_
- i. What have the Jews just learned about their condition? \_\_\_\_\_
- j. What do you think they want when they ask the question in Acts 2:37? \_\_\_\_\_
2. When the Jews ask the question, "What shall we do?" we must keep it in its context.
- a. The question is incomplete without the context. They are asking, "What shall we do to be saved?" They are lost.
- b. Peter's answer in Acts 2:38-39 relates to his primary theme in Acts 2:21. The issue is one of salvation.
3. Analyzing Peter's answer, Acts 2:38-39.
- a. Peter has identified **who** the Lord is upon whom they must call, Acts 2:22-36.
- b. He now tells them **how** to call upon Him, "repent and be baptized."
- c. He tells **why** they must call upon Him, "for the forgiveness of sins."
- d. He tells them the **result** of calling upon Him, "...receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." The **result** of calling upon Him in Acts 2:21 was expressed as "shall be saved."
- e. Who made the promise found in Acts 2:21? \_\_\_\_\_. See 2 Peter 1:20-21 for help.
- f. Who was the promise in Acts 2:21 for? It was for \_\_\_\_\_. Who is the promise in Acts 2:39 for? It was for \_\_\_\_\_. Do you think Acts 2:39 refers to a different promise? \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The "gift of the Holy Spirit" is the promised gift of salvation that was foretold by the Holy Spirit through the Old Testament prophets.
- a. Just as when Jesus "received...the promise of the Holy Spirit," Acts 2:33, indicated that He had received what the Holy Ghost had promised in Old Testament prophecy, so it is here. When we "receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" we receive that promised gift of salvation which the Holy Spirit foretold through the Old Testament prophets.
- b. When we examine Acts 2:38, we will conclude that the **purpose** of obedience to Christ in baptism is "for the remission of sins;" the **result** of having the remission of sins is that we receive salvation, the gift promised by the Holy Spirit. See Luke 1:77 for a parallel thought.

## II. The earnest of the Spirit is not the gift of the Holy Spirit.

- A. Paul uses the figure of the Holy Spirit as a down-payment or guarantee of our salvation in Ephesians 1:13-14. The KJV says, "...earnest of our inheritance." The NKJ says, "...guarantee of our inheritance."
1. An earnest or guarantee is defined as a "first installment, deposit, down payment, pledge, that pays a part of the purchase price in advance, and so secures a legal claim to the article in question, or makes a contract valid...a payment which obligates the contracting party to make further payments." (*Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, Bauer*)
- a. From this definition you can see why the word "guarantee" would be used.

- b. In modern Greek the same word (*arrabon*) is used to refer to an engagement ring. The ring becomes a deposit on the commitment that has been made.
  2. In this case, the Holy Spirit is said to be the guarantee of our inheritance.
- B. Is the guarantee given personally to every Christian, or is it given to God's people as a whole? It is to the whole.
  1. If I go to the mortgage company and make a down payment on a house, must I look up every board member and stockholder and give each of them a part? Or may I give the deposit to the organization as a whole and each shareholder receive his part in that way? The latter is obviously correct.
  2. In the same way, the Spirit was given as a guarantee in the first century.
    - a. A guarantee is a confirmation. The earnest of the Spirit is a confirmation of God's promises.
    - b. God's promises were confirmed by miracles of the Holy Spirit, Hebrews 2:3-4.
    - c. The miracles of the Holy Spirit constitute the earnest or guarantee from God of our inheritance. This guarantees the salvation of both Jews and Gentiles.
    - d. The confirmation, like the revelation, does not need to be repeated to each generation. When the minister pronounces that John and Jane are husband and wife, and confirms that the wedding has taken place by signing the certificate of marriage, must he continue to do that year after year? Is new confirmation necessary?
    - e. As each generation does what the first Christians did, they can be assured of receiving the same blessings that were promised to the first. The Holy Spirit was given as a guarantee of God's promises for all time.
- C. Note also that the word "sealed" is used in Ephesians 1:13-14.
  1. A seal is like a signature—something which guarantees the genuineness of a document or article. Therefore, the Ephesians received the Holy Spirit in such a way as to show that God accepted them as His people in the same way as He had accepted those who were the first to hope in Christ (the Jewish Christians).
  2. When the Holy Spirit was given to the Ephesians, He was given as a pledge and a seal of their inheritance together with the Jews. A seal is something which can be seen. In order for the Holy Spirit given to the Ephesians to be a seal and pledge He had to be given in such a way as to be seen or sensed in some way. This is what happened in Acts 19. This is when the Holy Spirit was given to them. Paul laid his hands on the twelve brethren and they received the Holy Spirit. Evidence of this was that "they began speaking with tongues and prophesying." (v. 6)

Conclusion:

1. Through His apostles and prophets, God promised man eternal life. He made a down payment on that promise by miraculous confirmation. Tangible signs and wonders provided the perfect pledge that God would stand behind His promise. The down payment was made at the same time the promise was made—in the first century.
2. Thus, the miracles of the Holy Spirit served as a seal and pledge that ALL Gentiles can be saved the same way as the Jews.
3. As we come to the close of this study on the Holy Spirit, we can be certain that there is much more that could have been studied. However, we have studied foundational truths that will keep us from error, and will protect us from false teachers.
4. We may also rest assured that the revelation given by the Holy Spirit is perfectly suited to the needs of man and serves as an all-sufficient guide for our lives. We may take the Bible in hand and know that we have all of the revealed will of God. Let us now resolve to take that perfect will into our hearts and live by the marvelous truths given to us. If we do that, God will bless us now, and we will surely be His in the world to come!