

"...And You Shall Receive The Gift Of The Holy Spirit"

by Wayne Goff

"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.'"

What does it mean: "*...and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*"? Some would say that the baptized believer receives the Holy Spirit **Himself**. They believe that the Person of the Holy Spirit *literally* dwells in the body of the believer. Others would say that the baptized believer receives the "gift" given by the Holy Spirit. It is what the Holy Spirit *gives* to the believer that is meant. Which is correct?

I believe the problem can be resolved by looking at Acts 3:19, which contains phrasing synonymous to that of Acts 2:38. It reads: "*Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.*" Look at the comparison: (1) **Repent** appears in both verses; (2) **Be baptized** equals **be converted**, since baptism is the point at which the conversion process concludes; (3) **Gift of the Holy Spirit** must then equal **times of refreshing** which come from the presence of the Lord. If this is true, then the answer to Acts 2:38 is that the phrase "*gift of the Holy Spirit*" refers to the **gift (blessing)** given by the Holy Spirit, which I believe to be correct. Now this explanation might not be as thrilling as the one that suggests the Holy Ghost personally indwells the believer, but I think it is the one which fits the context.

The "*gift of the Holy Spirit*" then refers to the *spiritual blessings* found only in Jesus Christ, Ephesians 1:3. The reward or gift of being a child of God and receiving all the blessings offered to one in such a relationship.

Those who would argue for a *personal indwelling* are emotionally attached to the concept, I believe. It gives them comfort to know that God is living in their body and encouraging them along life's pathway. But when you get right down to asking them what **exactly** the Holy Spirit does for the believer in that indwelling and you come to one of two answers: (1) They don't really know other than to offer some "feeling" inside (subjective); or (2) They offer these phenomenal experiences which are certain to convince anyone(?) that they have the Holy Ghost! (subjective again). But can you find such experiences, feelings, or ideas true of any New Testament Christian? If so, would you please point out that believer to me? I have yet to find it.

Realize also that God the Father (2 Cor. 6:16), Jesus Christ (Eph. 3:17), and the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:17) are said to " *dwell*" in men. So why do people get so worked up over the Holy Spirit and not God the Father or God the Son? I believe superstition has much to do with it.

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