

The University Heights Messenger

July 4, 2010

“And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”

It was requested that we discuss this last phrase of Acts 2:38. While true Christians are united on their understanding of the terms of admission into the glorious kingdom found at the beginning of this verse, there is much difference of understanding relating to the meaning of this final phrase. In truth, men much smarter and wiser than myself have been found taking different positions so I am not so foolish as to conclude this short article will answer the question definitively one way or the other. I will state some of the popular opinions and my estimation of them. You must decide what view you believe accords best with the Scriptures.

Some claim that the “gift of the Holy Spirit” is a reference to miracle working power, especially tongues, *that came upon all who obeyed the gospel just as it came upon the apostles on Pentecost*. This is the least defensible of the common views taken because of what we are told in Acts 8:14-16. **“Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.”** Clearly the Samaritans repentance and baptism *did not* lead to a miraculous outpouring of the Holy Spirit enabling them to speak in tongues or perform mighty works. Thus, this understanding may be dismissed out of hand.

What a person must determine in studying this phrase is whether the “gift of

the Holy Spirit” is a gift that the Spirit gives or is the Spirit Himself. Grammatically either fits. Because of this, some believe that this “gift” refers to the gift the Spirit gives those who have repented and been baptized. In this place that gift would be salvation. While there obviously is truth to that, I’m not sure that is the meaning here for a couple of reasons. First, Acts 5:32 says, **“And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him.** Obeying God and being baptized for the remission of one’s sins are equal, to do one is to do the other. The Holy Spirit is *given* to those who obey God. Also, in Acts 10:45 we find the other place where the phrase “the gift of the Holy Spirit” is used. There it is used in reference to Cornelius and the Gentiles and seems to clearly point to the Holy Spirit Himself being the gift.

Another view is that the phrase refers to the Holy Spirit personally coming to dwell within each Christian at the moment of their conversion, yet without the accompaniment of miraculous manifestations. It seems to me that the same objection to the first view is also the objection to this one. If the Holy Spirit had not come to the Samaritans then He was not personally indwelling them after their conversions. This is not to deny that the Spirit does indwell the saint. However, as I understand Scripture this is a figurative indwelling in which we are guided and controlled through what He has revealed to us in the Word.

The final interpretation of this verse which I will mention in this article is that the Spirit was promised to *them* and Acts 8:12-19 and 19:5-6 shows us how it was fulfilled--through the laying on of the

apostles hands. This is the interpretation I find myself most comfortable with. In Acts 2:38 Peter clearly told those people that when they repented and were baptized they would not only receive the remission of their sins (the unending result of baptism), but also the gift of the Holy Spirit. As we continue on in Acts we come to examples where this promise was being fulfilled. In both of those places we find miraculous manifestations of the Spirit upon baptized believers, yet in both cases it is accompanied with and possible through the laying on of the apostles hands.

Some object to this view because it would mean that "the gift of the Holy Spirit" from Acts 2:38 is no longer active today. That would obviously be true. Yet if the verse refers to the miracles disciples were empowered to do receiving the Spirit through the laying on of the apostles hands, then their cessation should not come as a surprise to any of us for Paul in 1 Corinthians 13:8 claimed such a time was coming. It *did* come with the completion of God's verbal revelation to man.

Which interpretation do you find most consistent with Scripture? Perhaps you know another that I did not mention which you believe is correct. If so, please share it with me! Either way, I encourage you to mine the Scriptures to come to your own understanding on the passage. Just remember, understandings tend to change as we grow so keep on studying!

IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

Glenn Kimberlin remains house bound.

Glen Davis continues to deal with the side effects of his medication.

Vera Howerton (Jeff's mother) has been diagnosed with bladder cancer and is currently recovering from surgery in Bowling Green. The course of her treatment has not yet been determined.

Ruel Baker remains in need of prayers as he continues to be treated.

Robert Brundige, Richard's brother, is in Parkside Manor in Cynthiana dealing with some issues. **Sarah** Brundige, Richard's mother, is in Cambridge Place Nursing Home and in need of our prayer.

Harley Miller has been able to return home. He is very frail and living alone now so we pray for his health and safety.

Glenn Goldy from East End will have back surgery Monday at Central Baptist.

Let's also remember **Esmeralda Agustin, David Day and his wife, Gail Stein, Shannon Gilbert, Harley Miller, Chuck McDavitt.**

UPCOMING EVENTS:

The men's meeting has been moved to July 18.

Remember to check the board behind the "sound room" for invitations from other congregations.

BIBLE READING SCHEDULE FOR 7/4-7/10:

Sunday: 1 Kgs 2, Ps 124, 2 Tim 3-4

Monday: 1 Kgs 3-4, Ps 125, Titus 1-3

Tuesday: 1 Kgs 5-6, Ps 126, Philemon

Wednesday: 1 Kgs 7, Ps 127, Heb 1-3

Thursday: 1 Kgs 8, Ps 128, Heb 4-6

Friday: 1 Kgs 9-10, Ps 129, Heb 7-8

Saturday: 1 Kgs 11, Ps 130, Heb 9

SERMON TOPICS:

Sunday AM. Biblical summary of angels

Sunday PM. Premillennialism 5 (The consequences)

REMEMBER THE BOX!

Sermon requests, prayer requests, and bulletin announcements can be placed in the box by the "Welcome" folders in the back. Requested Bible topics will become the subject of sermons or bulletin articles usually within a week or so of my receiving them. Today's morning sermon and bulletin article are both from requests received early last week.