

# The Gift of the Holy Spirit

Is the Gift of the Holy Spirit the Beginning of His Indwelling?

## Holy Spirit Indwelling Series Part 2

The first lesson in this series examined whether or not the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is literal or representational. It was the conclusion of the article the Holy Spirit does not literally indwell anyone, but the term refers to a Christian putting on a Christ like life which matches the Bible given by the Spirit. It is this which allows the individual to indwell all of the Godhead and the Word and vice versa. However, Christians who take the view the indwelling of the Holy Spirit as a literal one also often consider the term “gift of the Holy Spirit” in **Acts 2:38** to refer to the beginning of that indwelling. It is this professed belief upon which this article will focus.

**Acts 2** begins with the Holy Spirit miraculously being poured out upon the apostles (the Holy Spirit Baptism). Visibly tongues of fire rest upon each of them and then they begin speaking in various languages – occurrences which were miraculous. Following, the apostle Peter explains the occurrence was exactly what the prophet Joel had prophesied. The language Joel used was regarding miraculous occurrences: Sons and daughters prophesying, young and old seeing visions and dreams, wonders in the sky and on earth. The people were amazed by the occurrences before their very eyes at the hands of the Apostles. The prophecy by Joel was the Spirit was to be poured “*upon all mankind*”. Because of this language, many individuals believe every single individual was to receive God’s Spirit. This is not the case whether one believes in a literal indwelling or not. All mankind is a reference to male and female, rich and poor, Jew or gentile, all those would offer themselves up as servants to the debt they could not pay (Christ’s redemption of mankind from their sins.). The breadth of the term “*all mankind*” is validated in **Acts 2:18, 21**, and **Romans 1:16**.

Peter continues in **Acts 2** by proclaiming the miraculous resurrection and ascension of Christ. He convicts His audience of the crucifixion of Jesus. Their reply was “*what shall we do?*” Peter states the following:

**Acts 2:38** – *And Peter said to them, “Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

The first portions of Peter’s statement are fairly simple. The men were to change their lives from sinful ones to ones of obedience to God (**Acts 17:30**). They were to be immersed in water as is the New Testament pattern (**Acts 8:13, 36, 9:18, 10:47**,

**16:15, 33...** etc.). The second portion of the statement is where the need for focus lies. These people were told if they repented and were baptized they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. If the miraculous was going on all around a man because of the Holy Spirit, he was told of this day by Joel's prophecy of the miraculous by the Holy Spirit, and then he was told he would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit would he expect a non-miraculous non-visible gift such as a literal indwelling? The gift of the Holy Spirit was indeed being given to those who obeyed God (**Acts 5:32**). The three main beliefs are that this gift was the Holy Spirit himself (literal indwelling), salvation, or miraculous gifts. Doubt upon a literal indwelling was cast in the first article and speaking in regard to this verse the direct object in the Greek is "gift" not the Holy Spirit as a gift. Salvation was indeed available on the day of Pentecost. However, consider first that the promise of the Holy Spirit references the miraculous giving of the gospel and the miraculous around the Gospel (**Acts 1:8, Galatians 3**). Second, consider salvation occurs at baptism (**I Peter 3:21**) not after. Finally, consider the only two verses using the terms "gift of the Holy Spirit" are **Acts 2:38** and **Acts 10:45**. **Acts 10:45** describes the gift as having been poured out and in direct reference to **Acts 2**. The manifestation was the miraculous. These points again make it highly unlikely "salvation" was the "gift" being given.

Next in analysis consider the terms "gift" and "Holy Spirit" which are used in conjunction six times in the New Testament:

• **Acts 8:19-20** – *saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Spirit. But Peter said unto him, Thy silver perish with thee, because thou hast thought to obtain the gift of God with money.* – **Miraculous Context**

• **Acts 10:45-46** – *And they of the circumcision that believed were amazed, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.* – **Miraculous Context**

• **Acts 11:17** – *If then God gave unto them the like gift as he did also unto us, when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I, that I could withstand God?* – **Miraculous Context**

• **Ephesians 3:7** – *whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of that grace of God which was given me according to the working of his power.* – **Miraculous Context**

- **Ephesians 4:8** – *Wherefore he saith, When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, And gave gifts unto men.* – **Miraculous Context**
- **Acts 2:38** – **Miraculous Context.**

In every Biblical instance the terms “gift” and “Holy Spirit” are used in conjunction, we see the miraculous. It must be made clear, however, this article is written with full belief the miraculous ended with the first century. It is also a firm belief not everyone who was baptized received the miraculous. Only those who the apostles laid hands upon received the gift of the Holy Spirit. On the day of Pentecost which Joel pointed toward, the apostles were present to lay hands on individuals so they might receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Others in Biblical recordings who were baptized did not receive such a gift (**Acts 8:14-17**). The only way the gift of the Holy Spirit was imparted was through the hands of the apostles, none other could accomplish such a task. For an individual to pull a literal indwelling out of this text is out of context. It is often stated the indwelling comes from baptism, but the **Acts 8:14-17** text also shows this is an erroneous belief. The individuals in the text were baptized and did not receive the Holy Spirit until hands were laid upon them (Note: That text was not referring to an indwelling anyway, but the miraculous. Yet, nothing had been told the individuals about any kind of indwelling of the Spirit either. Which if a supposed indwelling was imparted at baptism, they would have known about it).

As stated in the first article, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is unity with God by obeying His will. It is not miraculous, it is not literal. The gift of the Holy Spirit as discussed in **Acts 2:38** was a miraculous endowment upon Christians of the first century by the hands of the apostles. The gift of the Holy Spirit is not the same as the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, however, it is clear that one who did not dwell in Christ (obedience) would not have the miraculous as well (**Acts 5:32**). For further explanation regarding **Acts 2:38** and the “gift of the Holy Spirit” please reference the works of Guy N. Woods (*Questions and Answers Open Forum* pp. 54-59) and Franklin Camp (*The Work of the Holy Spirit in Redemption* pp. 130-141).

This article focused upon the term “gift of the Holy Spirit” and whether or not it related to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The next article in this series will focus upon what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit and whether it is another term for indwelling.

