

The Gift of the Holy Spirit

Note: This is the 2nd of 3 articles on “Gifts in Scripture”

When Peter preached the gospel sermon on Pentecost, his hearers were cut to the heart. They realized they had rejected and crucified the Christ whom God had made both Lord and Savior. In conviction they asked, **“Men and brethren, what shall we do?”** Peter answered, **“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”** (Acts 2:37–38). This passage connects two blessings with obedience to the gospel: (1) **the remission of sins** and (2) **the gift of the Holy Spirit**. The sinner is not only forgiven but brought into a relationship with God. His sins are removed, he is added to God’s family, and he enters the fellowship in which the Spirit’s presence, influence, and help belong to those who are in Christ.

What is the gift of the Holy Spirit? It is the blessing God gives to those who obey the gospel in accordance with the provisions specified in Acts 2:38. This gift must not be confused with miraculous gifts such as speaking in tongues (languages), prophecy, and miraculous healing. Those miraculous gifts were given in the first century only, to reveal and confirm the word. The gift promised in Acts 2:38 is more personal—**the Holy Spirit’s presence and blessing in the Christian’s life**.

The Holy Spirit is not an influence, feeling, or emotion. He is a divine person of the Godhead. He revealed God’s word to the apostles, confirmed their message through signs and wonders, and continues to influence, convict, sanctify, and strengthen people through the truth He revealed. The Christian does not receive a mysterious power separated from Scripture. The Spirit dwells with God’s people as they live by faith, submit to the word, and obey Christ.

Paul asked the Corinthian brethren, **“Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?”** (1 Corinthians 3:16). He also wrote, **“Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His”** (Romans 8:9).

How is this gift received? Peter answered plainly. Those who heard the gospel were told to (1) repent of their sins and (2) be baptized in Jesus Christ’s name for the remission of sins. Only then would they receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise was not separated from repentance, and baptism. It was given to those who received and obeyed the gospel.

Who may receive this gift? Peter declared, **“For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call”** (Acts 2:39). Although first spoken to Jews in Jerusalem, the promise was not limited to them. It extends to all who are called through and obey the gospel, who come to Christ on His terms.

How can we know if we have received this Gift? A Christian knows that he or she has received the gift of the Holy Spirit because God has promised it to those who obey the gospel (Acts 2:38). The growing presence of the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace,

longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22–23). —provides visible evidence that the Christian is walking according to the Spirit and allowing His word to shape his or her life. The gift of the Holy Spirit assures Christians that God does not forgive them and then abandon them. The Spirit strengthens through the word, shapes Christian character, and calls God's children to bear spiritual fruit.). A Spirit-led life is not ruled by sinful desire but surrendered to God's will.

Acts 2:38 offers comfort and responsibility. God offers more than pardon; He offers life in Christ. The sinner is forgiven, added to the church, and made part of God's temple (1 Corinthians 3:16–17; 2 Corinthians 6:16). The question is whether you will receive the gospel as they did on Pentecost—by believing in Christ, repenting of sin, being baptized for the remission of sins, and walking faithfully with God.