

# A STUDY ON THE GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST

## A Summary of the 3 “Main” Positions on the Gift of the Holy Ghost/Spirit

1. Many take/teach the position that this refers to a non-miraculous, personal indwelling by the Spirit Himself. The idea here is that the Holy Spirit, in a non-miraculous way, comes and personally lives inside a Christian at the point of proper baptism. I deny this view. It seems very strange indeed that the Holy Ghost gives those immersed no awareness of His presence, and He requires them to resort to an ancient Book to learn His will via study when He is actually in direct contact with man’s heart.
2. Many others believe and teach the gift of the Holy Ghost is the equivalent of pardon from past sins. I would say that this position is certainly the most accepted amongst “conservative churches of Christ.” Let’s be clear: this view certainly has merit. To be sure, this position is simply leaps and bounds above the literal personal indwelling view. This is the view that I have previously held and taught. However, while this position does have merit, it simply no longer seems to me to be the best choice.
3. The third view, and the one I believe is correct, is that the gift mentioned in **Acts 2:38** is the ability for some in the early church (and only in the early church) to work miracles for the confirmation of the preached message (**Hebrews 2:14; Mark 16:17-20; Galatians 3:1-2, et al**) until the time of completed revelation (**1 Corinthians 13:8-10; Ephesians 4:7-13**) at which time the “gift of the Holy Ghost” would no longer be needed.

### Is it impossible that view # 3 may be correct?

Certainly the answer is “no.” It is not impossible that the ability to work miracles in the infant stages of the early church is the gift of the Holy Ghost mentioned in **Acts 2:38**.

If the gift is, indeed, the ability to work miracles, then Peter and the other apostles were there to pass it along. While all of the particulars are not recorded for us, i.e. who got it (all, some, most, very few, etc), did they get it on that day, etc., this does not prove the position to be impossible.

### Does view #3 compromise other New Testament passages?

I have to say that the answer is “no.” Indeed, when we really take a look at this position carefully we find that it is not out of joint with a single passage of scripture, but instead actually harmonizes with what the rest of the New Testament teaches with regard to the miraculous. If we will allow the Bible to interpret itself then really all confusion over the gift of the Holy Ghost goes away.

### Is this view something new or novel on my part?

The answer to this question is “no.” However, even if it were (which it is not), if it could be proven true by solid biblical investigation then whether or not it is “new” is of no consequence.

Now listen, I am the first to demand that a study of scripture cannot, and must not, rest on what scholars have said. So please understand, although I cite below some statements from men from yesteryear; I do so not to bolster my conclusion, but simply to show that I have not pulled something “out of left field.” Here are some quotes:

- *“The gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38) is the bestowal of the miraculous.”* – David Lipscomb
- *“Hence, we conclude that Peter promised the Spirit to such as would believe and obey the gospel therein as ample measure as he has power to impart it to them. Why should he not thus now amply bestow it upon them, having power to do so? And why should he not thus amply promise it to them? We are inclined to think that Peter intended to promise something more than an ordinary measure of the Spirit to those he addressed at the beginning.”* – T.W. Brents
- *“It seems that some of the early Christians had the miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit, and that this is what Peter meant.”* – H. Leo Boles

- “*We have in this phrase, the gift of the Holy Spirit, as has been said, but twice in all the apostolic writings; - Acts 2:38 and 10:45. Both of which denote all that is comprehended in the promise of Joel, the Holy Spirit and all the manifestations of His power.*” - Alexander Campbell

Again, just because these men held this view means nothing to me in and of itself. If a million folks held the view and it were proven to be scripturally wrong I would not submit to it. If no other person held the view, but could not overcome it scripturally I would not back away from it. I just want you to see that many men –far more capable than me – have come to the same conclusion. By the way, I came to this conclusion prior to ever knowing who has held to it in the past. My conclusion is the product of careful study, not politics.

### Let’s set the stage for the statement made in Acts 2:38

The kingdom, i.e. the church, was to come with power. We know this because **Mark 9:1** states: “*And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.*”

After the resurrection of our Lord, this same subject was still on his mind, for **Luke 24:49** records: “*And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.*”

In **Acts 1:8** Jesus is still talking about the same thing, for the text there reads: “*But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*”

Finally the time for the power to come came.

This of course was the day of Pentecost – that first Pentecost following the resurrection of the Lord.

What was the nature of that power – that promise – Jesus spoke of?

God has not left us to guess. Instead we must keep putting the pieces of the puzzle together in order to find out.

In **Acts 2:4** the power came just as Jesus promised. That text records: “*And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*”

Now let’s add it up:

- What was the nature of the power Jesus spoke of in **Mark 9:1**? (Miraculous)
- What was the nature of the promise which Jesus said was to come to the apostles in **Luke 24:49**? (Miraculous)
- What was the nature of the power Jesus spoke of in **Luke 24:49**? (Miraculous)
- What was the nature of the power Jesus mentioned in **Acts 1:8**? (Miraculous)
- What was the nature of the received promise via the Holy Ghost in **Acts 2:4**? (Miraculous)

So then, the biblical answer to the question: what was the nature of the promise Jesus spoke – the promise that came on the day of Pentecost – is the ability to perform the miraculous (as confirmation of the spoken Word).

**That is 5 references to the Holy Ghost in connection with Acts 2. Each of the 5 references thus far has been with the miraculous in view.**

**Let’s keep studying.**

After the apostles were baptized with the Holy Ghost, they began to speak in languages that they had not studied to the sundry visitors from “every nation under heaven” (**Acts 2:5**). The Jews and Jewish proselytes are the folks in view here (**Acts 2:10**).

In **vs. 6** we learn that the news of “**this**” (i.e. the miraculous power being shown and mentioned in **vs. 4**) was noised abroad. As a result of the news, a multitude of people came together and when they took in the situation, they were confounded by what was going on (i.e. by the miracles).

The crowd was mixed with sincere folks and mockers (**2:12-13**).

However, all folks that day were amazed at what was going on. In **2:12** it is written, “*And they were all amazed, and were in doubt (great perplexity), saying one to another, What meaneth this?*”

- What does “**this**” refer to here?
- The same thing it meant in **vs. 4**.
- “This,” without question, refers to the ability to do that which is miraculous.

When we consider things in context we see that we have 2 (**vs. 6 & 12**) more references to the Holy Spirit’s work/the promised power in connection with **Acts 2**.

Each of these revolves around the miraculous.

**This brings our total to 7 references – each within the obvious context of the miraculous.**

**Let’s keep studying.**

Peter’s sermon is the inspired answer to their question of “*what meaneth this*” (**v 12**).

- Peter starts off and explains what “**this**” is.
- Under inspiration he stated that “**this**” was the miraculous activity in fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy made hundreds of years earlier (the promise that the Lord spoke of in **Luke 24:49**).
- What they were witnessing was the outpouring of miraculous abilities. Peter said: “*Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.*” (**Acts 2:14-21**).
- ◆ Up to this point only the apostles have been recipients of the promise of power (via Holy Ghost baptism).
- ◆ However, Joel’s prophecy – which Peter applies to New Testament times – clearly shows that not only the apostles were going to be the recipients of the miraculous.
- ◆ It also included other folks besides the apostles (this would have to biblically come via the laying on of the apostles’ hands, save for the household of Cornelius).
- ◆ So you see, the language of Joel – applied by Peter under inspiration – just cannot simply be limited to the apostles and Cornelius.

- ◆ Joel's language included more than that (cf. sons, daughters, etc).
- ◆ Joel's prophecy was a summary of the miraculous activity – **miraculous activity that we know from other passages was not needed after that which was perfect, i.e. the completed Word of God, had come.**

Now here are a couple of questions:

Since Peter is explaining and applying Joel's prophecy to the early church – and since the prophecy included others than the apostles being able to do the miraculous (we know through the laying on of the apostles' hands), is it unreasonable to suggest that the promise of the gift of the Holy Ghost was the ability to do miracles?

Is this not an inspired, contextual conclusion? Certainly seems so to me.

**Anyway, after considering Joel's message there have now been 9 references to the Holy Spirit in connection with Acts 2.**

**All 9 are in a miraculous context.**

**Let's keep studying.**

Peter continues his sermon. He explains that the Jews had, with wicked hands, slain the Son of God.

They should have known better in that His approval with God was verified by his miraculous abilities (2:22-23).

Peter goes on to say that what they were seeing was evidence of the fact that Jesus was, after all, who He claimed to be and that this miraculous demonstration was proof.

Indeed Peter said: *“This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.” For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:32-36).*

- How were they witnesses to those folks?
- Was it simply because they had seen Jesus alive after death.
- Surely they had, but how would that fact pierce the heart of hard-hearted Jews?
- The idea certainly is that they were witnesses in that they were working miracles – just like in the context of Acts 5:32.
- This dovetails wonderfully with scripture (cf. John 15:26-27; 16:7-9; also note Acts 15:7-8 where Peter uses the same word in the exact same kind of context to refer to the miraculous as the witness).
- Here are, once again, the words “**promise**” and “**this.**”
  - What do these have reference to?
  - Just what they have had reference to all the way through the context thus far – the miraculous.

**The total is now 12 references to the Spirit in connection with Acts 2.**

**All 12 are in a miraculous context.**

**Let's keep studying.**

Some of the Jews got it, or were willing to accept their sin.

Some realized they killed the son of God.

Thus it is recorded: *“Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37)*

The answer was given: *“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call” (Acts 2:38-39).*

Now please notice and keep in mind that, according to inspired Peter, whatever the promise is, the gift is the same thing.

As I said earlier, I have believed and taught that the gift was salvation; i.e. pardon from past sins.

However, when I really got to looking at the context and the subsequent passages in Acts, I changed my mind.

This was not the easiest of processes. I had to ask myself some questions – questions that I did not at first really want to accept the answer to – but was forced to do so in view of the weight of evidence.

Yes, I had to ask myself the questions as all honest truth seekers will do:

- On what **contextual** and **reasonable** basis would one consider that the gift of the Holy Ghost had anything to do with something other than the miraculous?
- What **compelling** evidence is there to suggest that Peter now switches gears, at the height of his sermon, and explains the gift; i.e. the promise – something mentioned heretofore time and again in a miraculous context – as something other than the ability to work miracles?

You see, up until **2:38-39** all references to the **promise** (contextually referred to as **the gift**) are references to the miraculous.

Notice the list below:

1. **Mark 9:1** – Kingdom will come with power (Miraculous)
2. **Luke 24:49** – Wait in Jerusalem for the promise (Miraculous)
3. **Luke 24:49** – Power will come to you from on high (Miraculous)
4. **Acts 1:8** – You will receive power (Miraculous) after baptized with Holy Ghost
5. **Acts 2:4** - Promised power comes after Holy Ghost baptism (Miraculous)
6. **Acts 2:6** – News of this (Miraculous) spread abroad
7. **Acts 2:12** – What does this (Miraculous) mean?
8. **Acts 2:16** – This (Miraculous) is that; i.e. what you see is a fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy. The promise is being fulfilled.
9. **Acts 2:17-18** – Joel’s prophecy says who would be recipients of the promise (Miraculous)
10. **Acts 2:32** – Apostles are witnesses to truth of lesson (Miraculous)

11. **Acts 2:33** – The promise is again mentioned (Miraculous)
12. **Acts 2:33** – Reference is again made to “this” (Miraculous)

Honestly, why would the text shift gears completely?

Why would Peter refer to a prophecy that explains the promise (later referred to as the gift) as only having to do with the miraculous and then conclude by promising a non-miraculous gift without any explanation whatsoever?

This is a key point.

It really helps to remember that **Acts 2** is not set within an ordinary situation at all but in a most extraordinary setting.

Yet, many assume that when Peter promised the gift of the Holy Spirit he was speaking about a totally non-miraculous gift (whether the personal indwelling or pardon from past sins).

Something we would do well to remember is that **Acts 2:38** was first given in the first century – not the twentieth or twenty-first century – and in a supernatural framework at that.

I think that if we keep this in mind it really helps.

Instead of trying to place that Pentecost audience in a 20<sup>th</sup> or 21<sup>st</sup> century setting, would it not be much more profitable to place ourselves in that first-century setting **so as to understand the gift of the Holy Ghost as they understood it initially?**

#### **A careful look at Acts 2:38**

Now let's take a look at the verse word by word from the point at which we draw different conclusions.

The text says: ***Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.***

- **And:**
  - ◆ This means something in addition (in this case in addition to pardon) we can see similar like usage in **Mark 16:16: *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.***
  - ◆ There we know it serves as a conjunction between two **different** things; why so much trouble here?
  - ◆ Surely Peter is not saying, “Be saved and ye shall be saved.”
  - ◆ I believe that this little “and” really hurts the idea of the gift being pardon from past sins, but let's keep digging.
- **Ye:**
  - ◆ This is a personal pronoun.
  - ◆ It is the subject of this expression.
  - ◆ Ye who? The context tells us it is the Jews who believed (**Acts 2:37**).

- *Shall receive:*

- ◆ “*Shall receive*” is a verb in the future tense.
- ◆ Now granted that could refer to pardon in that they had not yet been baptized.
- ◆ But does that fit the contextual flow of the whole background best? I say no.
- ◆ Also, it would do us great benefit to take a few moments to look at this word “receive” in similar contexts:
  - “**Receive**” is employed in **Acts 8:15-17** with the apostolic transmission of miraculous power to the recently immersed Samaritans by Peter and John.
  - Paul inquired of a dozen Ephesians in **Acts 19:2** if they had "received" the Holy Ghost since they believed (or since they were saved). Paul was surely thinking of the miraculous when he raised the query as evidenced by the following passages in that context.
  - "**Receive**" is again employed among the Galatians in their reception of the miraculous (**Gal. 3:1ff**).
  - Peter, in **Acts 10:47**, referred to the miraculous working of the Holy Spirit as proof positive that Gentiles were worthy of kingdom entrance and should not be denied immersion in water.
  - The anointing in **1 John 2:27** is doubtless miraculous in nature. John used the word "received" in connection with it.
  - There are more that could be given.
  - Since "**receive**" is the very word employed in the KJV time and again to convey instance after instance of where the miraculous was received, why do so many rule out the option when it comes to **Acts 2:38**?
  - Again, let's not forget that this verse is surrounded by a setting and context that is extremely miraculous.
- ◆ “**Shall receive**” is a verb and it is what is called a transitive verb and as such requires a direct object.

- *“The gift of the Holy Ghost”*

- ◆ This phrase supplies the object.
- ◆ Without going into a big grammar lesson it cannot be the Spirit Himself, but the object must be the Spirit's gift; i.e. the gift was not the Holy Spirit Himself, but rather something the Spirit gave.
- ◆ The Greek term for "**gift**" here is of wonderful weight in this matter. Let's look at it:
  - It comes from **dorea**. How is this word used in similar contexts?
  - In **Acts 8:20** Peter employs this term in speaking of the very gift erring Simon sought to purchase with silver from Peter and John. Surely, none will take the position that the gift in **Acts 8:20** refers to that which was ordinary or non-miraculous, right?
  - This word is used in **Acts 10:45** to describe what happened at Cornelius' house.
  - Peter used the same expression in **Acts 11:17** in his defense against objecting Jewish brethren at Jerusalem. Surely, this was not the ordinary or the non-miraculous.

- Paul used this term in **Ephesians 3:7** and **4:7**. Both verses **when studied by the careful student will prove to be set contexts where the miraculous is being discussed.**
- It sure does seem strange if, indeed, in all of these similar contexts **dorea**, or one of its derivatives, carries behind it a supernatural or miraculous meaning and yet is used differently in **Acts 2:38**.
- If we were in a study with some Catholics and baptism came up. What would we do?
  - We would show them the terms for baptism.
  - We would show them the contexts in which baptism is found.
  - We would tell them that we must allow those contexts to limit the meanings.
  - We would not allow them to jump the track out of context.
  - We would say something like, “We cannot think beyond what is written, we must call Bible things Bible names, we must let the Bible define its own terms, thus it seems like when the Bible defines baptism for repentant sinners it is immersion in water, not sprinkling, etc.”
- The same is true with regard to this issue:
  - We look at the terms.
  - We note similar contexts in which the terms are used.
  - We show how the contexts limit the meaning.
  - This is how we study.
  - Since we are not to think beyond what is written, and since we must let the Bible define its own terms, it sure seems like the gift in **Acts 2:38** should be miraculous in nature because when used in similar contexts it always has reference to the miraculous.
- Let me illustrate what I am saying:
  - ◆ **Acts 8:20** – Gift of God = Miraculous
  - ◆ **Acts 10:45** – Gift of the Holy Ghost (**same phrase, by same man, in same book**) = Miraculous
  - ◆ **Acts 11:17** – Like gift = Miraculous (**by same man who spoke what we today refer to as Acts 2:38**).
  - ◆ **Ephesians 3:7** – Gift of the grace of God = Miraculous
  - ◆ **Ephesians 4:7** – Gift of Christ = Miraculous
  - ◆ **Acts 2:38** – Gift of the Holy Ghost = \_\_\_\_\_ . Honestly now, what best fills in the blank?
- It could be that **Acts 2:38** is the only exception to the rule, but on what basis we could make that claim I am not sure.
- We have rightfully taught for years that an assumed meaning of a phrase, text, etc, cannot take precedence over the known and inspired meaning. If we insist on such with other people regarding other passages, why not with regard to ourselves with **Acts 2:38**? Do we practice what we preach?

### A careful look at Acts 2:39

- *For*

- ◆ This is a word used to explain what was just said. “To assign reason” to a statement.
- ◆ This word simply serves as a transition before adding more information to the preceding thought.

- *The promise*

- ◆ As we have seen, the promise and the gift equate to the same thing.
- ◆ What is this promise?
- ◆ We have already noted that, contextually, this is the same promise that Christ had reference to in **Luke 24:49** – the promise of miraculous power from the Holy Ghost (**cf. Acts 1:4**).
- ◆ Again, we noted 12 contextual connections to this promise prior to this verse and each had its roots in the miraculous.
  - Specifically Peter equates the promise with the ability to do that which is miraculous.
- ◆ A contextual conclusion warrants against this being the Abrahamic promise **although that is certainly found in Christ**.
- ◆ The same word is used in just about the same way in **Ephesians 1:12-13** (sealed with the promise of the Holy Spirit). This is beyond question miraculous in nature **and the promise came after they were already Christians**.

- *Is to you*

- ◆ You who?
- ◆ Per the context: it was those confounded **Jews** who were there that day, whose question served as a springboard for Peter’s sermon.
- ◆ Now while salvation is certainly offered to Jews, is that the contextual point he is making?

- *To your children*

- ◆ What children?
- ◆ The context limits it to **Jewish** children.
- ◆ Is this a reference to simply posterity however?
- ◆ I think not. Instead, if we keep Joel’s prophecy in mind and look at how he used children in connection with that prophecy, we gain a better understanding.
- ◆ Joel equates children to a generation (**cf. Joel 1:2-3**).
- ◆ Thus, the idea is as follows: the promise (**the ability for at least some to do miracles in the early church**) was to extend only to the next generation of those then living on that Pentecost Day. By then the Word would be confirmed and recorded and there would be no use for such miraculous power to continue.

- *And to all that are afar off*
  - ◆ Those who see the promise as being Abrahamic in nature claim this connects to “children” and thus shows that the promise (salvation) is extended forever.
  - ◆ I suggest that the context is still miraculous as has been noted time and again throughout this study.
  - ◆ Scripturally this is a reference to Gentiles (**Ephesians 2:11-17**).
  - ◆ This dovetails with Joel’s statement of “all flesh.”
  
- *As many as the Lord our God shall call.*
  - ◆ First of all, this is not saying “call on the name of the Lord” for salvation as in **Acts 2:21**.
  - ◆ Here it is referring not to those who call on the name of the Lord, but to those whom God would call: note that the number is not universal (the gospel is for all, but limited).
  - ◆ The word call is not the same as that in **Acts 2:21** or in **2 Thessalonians 2:14**.
    - True this word can mean “to summons” or “to invite,” but it is certainly not the common word for such.
    - Do you not find it strange that the word is different, *if* it applies to **Acts 2:21; 2 Thessalonians 2:14**?
    - This word has the idea “to call the performance of a thing,” “to call to a task,” “to call to an appointment,” “to summons to a task” (**Mark 6:7; cf. Acts 13:2; Acts 16:10; James 5:14; Acts 23:17-23**).
  - ◆ This word is used 30 times in the New Testament and is never once used in connection with calling a sinner to salvation through the gospel, unless, of course, **Acts 2:39** is the lone exception.
  - ◆ Given these findings, is it not probable that there is something other than salvation in view in this text?
  - ◆ Also, remember, the gift and the promise are the same and, contextually, the promise is the ability to work miracles (**Acts 2:33**).
  - ◆ Thus, what must the promise (which is the same as the gift) be here?
  - ◆ The ability to work miracles.
  - ◆ More specifically the ability to work miracles to confirm the Word:
    - To Jews and eventually to the Gentiles.
    - To the Jews and Gentiles – lasting until the next generation – until which time the Word would be completed.
    - To as many Jews and Gentiles as God saw fit to call to the task per the laying on of the apostles’ hands.

## **But this means miracles happen today!**

Not So!

Let's think about this.

There have been no baptisms with the Holy Spirit since **Acts 10**. That is why Paul could affirm some 20 years later that there is only one baptism (**Eph. 4:5**). Hence, we have no recipients of baptism of the Holy Spirit today.

Be it recalled that spiritual gifts (all nine of them—**1 Cor. 12:8-10**) could *only* be transmitted by baptism of the Holy Spirit or by apostolic imposition of hands.

The only other way of reception was by imposition of apostolic hands.

Neither Holy Spirit baptism nor the laying on of the apostles' hands is available today!

Hence, we have no miraculous measures of the Spirit at work in our era, nor can there ever be again, scripturally speaking.

The position that the gift of the Holy Ghost is the ability for some in the early church to work miracles simply will allow for no such miraculous gifts today – not even one!

### **Conclusion**

Let's sum up all that has been said:

- Jesus spoke of a promise of power to the apostles (**Mark 9:1; Luke 24:49**) (we know this is miraculous).
- They were to wait in Jerusalem for the promise (**Acts 1:4**) (miraculous).
- The promise of power came (**Acts 2:4**) (miraculous).
- The working of the promised power caused some to be confounded (**Acts 2:6**) (miraculous).
- The working of the promised power caused the crowd to ask a question as to the meaning, giving Peter a springboard for a sermon (**Acts 2:12**) (miraculous).
- Peter explains – under inspiration – that what they were seeing was the promised power prophesied by Joel (**Acts 2:14-21**) (miraculous).
- Peter proves that Jesus was who He said He was in that He (Jesus) sent forth the promised power upon the apostles – thus causing what the crowd was seeing and hearing (the miraculous) and at the same time giving witness to the truthfulness of the preaching (**Acts 2:32-33**) (miraculous).
- Those who believed the apostles' preaching and their witness were told to be baptized and they would receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.
- Notice:
  - ◆ The gift and the promise are the same.
  - ◆ Yet the promise is biblically defined as miraculous.
  - ◆ Thus, how can the gift of the Holy Ghost/ the promise be anything else?

- The word gift is used in a miraculous sense in all other similar contexts.
- The word receive is used in a miraculous sense in all other similar contexts.
- Acts 2:39 serves no problem to the view and actually dovetails in with Joel's prophecy.
- The position does not allow for the miraculous today.

**Now, which is more in harmony with the context, grammar, and which is in harmony with what you likely have always heard?**

- *“Then Peter said unto them (those present), Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and (when you do this) ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (forgiveness of past sins). For the promise (the opportunity for salvation) is unto you (Jews), and to your children (your kids), and to all that are afar off (any and all), even as many as the Lord our God shall call (through the gospel).”*
- *“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and (in addition to being saved from past sins) ye (the Jews present) shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (the ability to work miracles – understood from other passages to be done through the laying on of the apostles' hands). For the promise (Joel's promise of miracles) is unto you (the Jews), and to your children (the next generation), and to all that are afar off (the Gentiles), even as many as the Lord our God shall call (to the specific task of working miracles in the infant church to confirm the Word until the time of completed revelation).”*

Again, I used to believe the former, but now hold to the later.