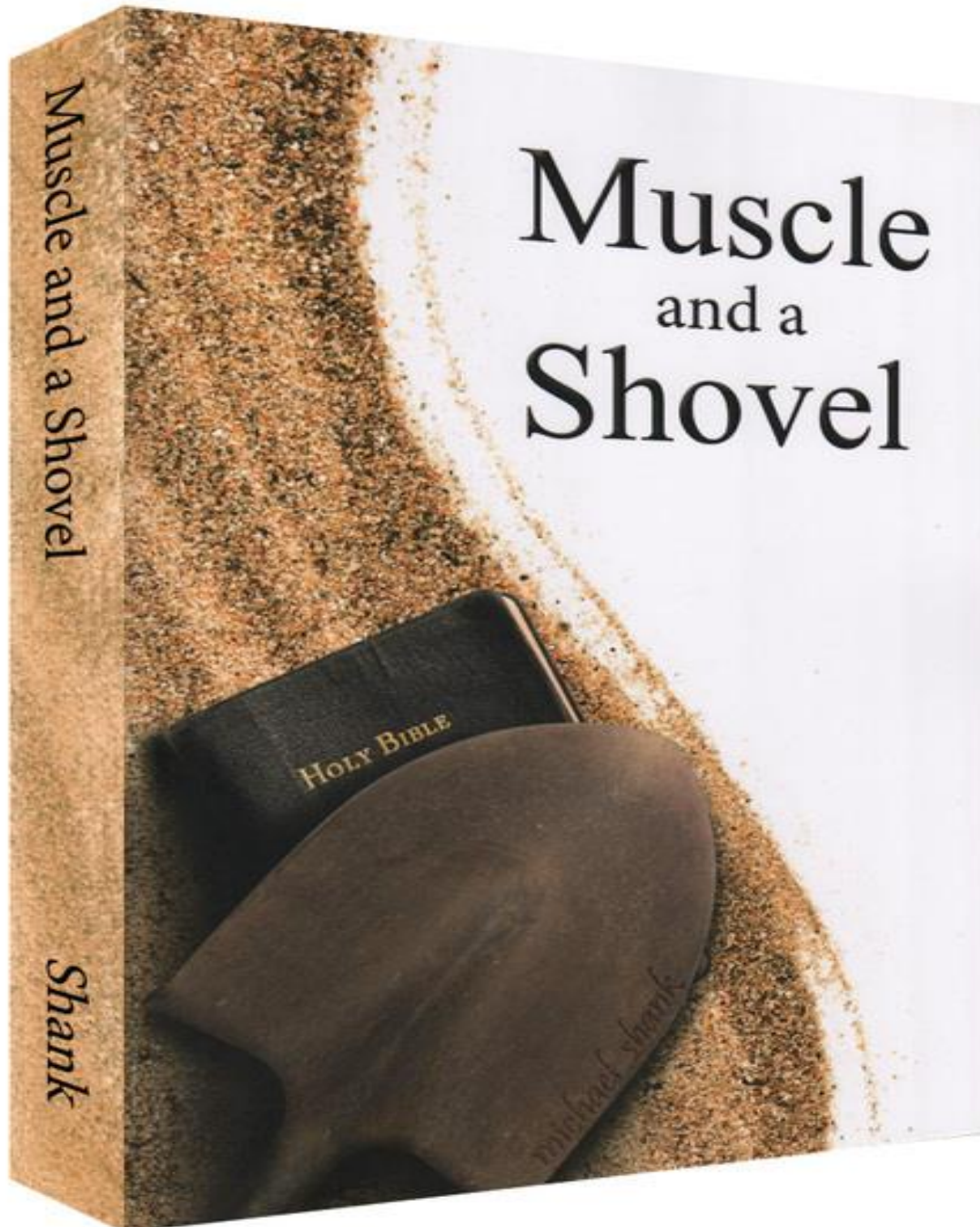


The Teaching Tool Deficiency of Muscle & A Shovel: Chapter 35

By David Lee Burris



Muscle and a Shovel is a true story about a pair of young newly-weds who move to the city to chase the American dream. In the middle of their pursuit they are befriended by a man who turns their beliefs about God, thier church, and their faith upside-down.

Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Catholics, Community Churches - no one is spared when the truth is at stake - and their new friend Randall isn't concerned about *political correctness* or *religious tolerance*!

This raw, uncensored story grabs you and doesn't let go! Prepare to have your intellect, emotions, and existing beliefs set on fire!

One Baptist Preacher's Response:

This story provoked me on spiritual levels I didn't know existed! Everyone who reads this story should be prepared to "fight or flee"- *Muscle and a Shovel* is one of those rare books that will raise your blood-pressure. You'll either give it to everyone you know or put it into a shredder - there's no middle-ground. This book might turn the religious world on its ear!

-name withheld by request (Baptist Minister of 18 years, Nashville, TN)

N.B. Hardman's Nephew Said:

Timely and MUCH needed - this is a book you'll read over and over! It's a perfect gift written by an exquisite talent for simplicity, and direct enough to touch the heart of every reader. It is a storehouse to treasure. Every Christian should have a copy of this book in their home!

-Dan Webb (Educator, Author, Gospel Preacher)

Michael Shank earned his BS in Management Communication from Southern Christian University. Michael and his family live in rural southern Illinois.



The Book grabs the reader with the first chapter – the rest of the book a flashback to eight months before. Because of this feature most readers – including myself – were glued to the narrative - losing sleep – reading the book – cover-to-cover - uninterrupted.

“What are three white faces doing in this part of ‘Nashvull’ at this time a night?” That’s the way native Nashvillians pronounced the city’s name. The Metro-Nashville officer stood at my driver’s side window shining the beam from a long Magnum flashlight in my face. There we were: me, my wife and my best friend Larry in the back seat. I had pulled our black Pontiac Grand Am to the side of the road at the corner Herman Street and 16th. We were only a few hundred yards from Fisk University’s campus. Larry had been trying to get us to our location, but we were lost. I was searching for the words as I squinted to see the cop through his light. He was the biggest black man I had ever seen – about 7’ tall. He could have been a twin to the guy from the movie The Green Mile. I bet he played pro-ball. His polished bald head and “fire-hydrant” sized arms reminded me of the Mr. Clean man. We’d been profiled. Profiled? Yes. Any good cop worth their salt would have done the same. We were out of place in this neighborhood, and the fact that we were driving so slowly made it appear that we might have been looking to buy drugs.

I saw the red and blue lights in my rear-view just as we were heading up 16th Avenue North right across the railroad tracks and a few yards beyond Watkins Park. Nashvillians at that time called this area of town “The West Loop.” It was an urban neighborhood comprised mostly of African-American residents. The West Loop was also home of Fisk University, Tennessee State University and the beloved Meharry Medical College. Unfortunately, an element of the homeless had disgorged into The West Loop neighborhoods, along with the usual accompaniment of drugs. Therefore, three white faces meandering slowly through this part of town at 12:45 a.m. was enough to motivate any alert cop to do a traffic check.

“You’ll never believe me,” I told the officer. “Try me.” He responded in a deep bass voice that conveyed the unspoken message, “Let’s hear what you’ve got little man. I’ve heard it all before.” My heart said, “Be honest. Tell him. You’ve got nothing to lose. Truth has brought you this far, hasn’t it?”

I might as well give it a shot. “We’re on our way to get baptized!” The giant’s eyes widened like someone had mashed his big toe with a dry-wall hammer. “Tonight? Where?” he asked with a combination of suspicion and guarded excitement. I told him the name of the church while shamefully admitting that we were lost. Guys just don’t admit that they’re lost. What the cop said next not only blew my mind, it cemented the possibility of something I had long wondered about. Providence. Not Rhode Island’s biggest city in Narragansett Bay estuary, but the providence of God. Providence, in this context, is defined as the foreseeing care and guidance of God or a manifestation of Divine care.

I was never really sold on the concept of Divine providence until I heard the giant cop’s response. It was then, when hearing his words, that the principle was solidified in my mind. The officer’s entire demeanor changed. He smiled and said, “I’m a member of that church and I actually attend that particular congregation! God must have wanted me to pull you over, because this part of town is not safe this time of night! I’m going to get back into my cruiser, so just follow me and I’ll take you right to the building!” I was speechless. I turned to look at my wife and then to Larry in the back seat. None of us knew what to think or say, but we were beginning to realize that God’s fingerprint was on the events that were unfolding that night. I watched the police officer in my driver’s side mirror as he literally ran back to his squad-car. He ripped out around us leaving the red and blue lights going. Nobody back in Eldorado, Illinois would ever believe this. We followed the police car with his lights flashing, feeling as though we were in some kind of a secret parade following “John Coffey’s” brother. We drove past Rio Grande Ave, then Ireland Street, past Fisk on our left, then taking a right on Jackson Street. We continued down a few more blocks and followed as he turned into the parking lot of the church building.

It was 12:52 a.m. As we turned into the church parking lot Larry said, “Would you take a look at that.” My wife Jonetta (pronounced John-ē-tuh) whispered softly, “Who are they?” None of us expected to see the elders and deacons standing out there in front of the building. They were all waiting for us to arrive. There they stood, shoulder to shoulder on that cold March night - in suits and ties! Those Godly men came to the building for the great event. They left the warmth and comfort of their own homes without hesitation, even wearing suits to demonstrate the dignity and import of the occasion.

I knew that someone would be there. I'd anticipated two, maybe three, but not a crowd this size. The officer stepped from his car and greeted the men. It was evident that they all knew one another well. After a lot of smiles, hugs and handshakes the huge cop explained what had happened in the minutes prior to our arrival; pulling us over, thinking we were buying drugs, then giving us an escort to the church building, being worried about our safety. He said his goodbyes, killed the emergency lights and drove off into the dark of the West Loop night. The men of the church greeted us as long-lost children. They met us like family members returning after a long trip. Each man made a formal introduction of himself then expressed his personal excitement over our decision to follow Jesus Christ. They brought us into the building and showed us our respective changing rooms. As we started to change into the baptismal garments we could hear them singing out in the auditorium.

They sang just like they did in the first century. No music! They just used their voices, exactly as Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 described. We'd never heard anything like it before. It was loud, primitive, uninhibited and even off-key at times, but it was also beautiful and soul-stirring. While changing in the back room I listened to the men sing and searched for a word to describe their singing without instruments. My mind chased after the right word, but I couldn't land on it. "Stick your tongue out Mike," the thought went through my mind, "because the word is on the tip of your tongue!" We changed into our baptismal garments and the men continued to sing and pray. The songs were rich in melody and meaning. Their prayers between songs were beyond description. They sang with such fervor that, at one point, I thought dozens more had entered the building while we were back in our changing rooms. "Don't they know what time it is? Don't they know that they'll wake up the entire neighborhood?" My "spiritually immature" mind wasn't grasping the magnitude of the transformation that was about to take place that night. It was 1:15 a.m. Jonetta and I stepped to the top of the baptistery. We were barefoot, our hands locked together and tears streaming down our faces. Jonetta and I stood at the top of the steps. We looked at each other about to take that step. We knew only one thing for certain... our lives would never be the same. She kissed my cheek and the word that I'd been searching for rushed to the forefront of my mind. It was the one word that so accurately described the men's singing. Pure.

The First Chapter Ends With These Words The Rest Of The Book Answers

How in the world did a young, white, small-town, materialistic, ambitious, partying, not too religious - but members of a big denomination, married couple get the top of these steps? You're about to find out. Just consider yourself forewarned. It's a crazy story... and entirely true.

However, denominationalist critics have seized upon a section toward the end of their story that leaves a false impression – one requiring greater explanation – one every personal worker utilizing this as gospel in modern storybook needs to take seriously. Especially critical are those of the Baptist denomination that within the first year of this book's publication started suffering losses in the many thousands to the churches of Christ due to this book alone. The book's deficiency has been pointed out in typical form by the denominational preacher hereby quoted:

The same type of critique arises later in the book when Randal discusses the "gift of the Holy Spirit" & takes the position that the gift referred to in Acts 2:38 is salvation. Among churches of Christ there are three basic positions in regard to the gift of Acts 2:38: the gift either refers to the Spirit himself, the gift of salvation, or the gift of miraculous abilities to the early church.

This typical denominational critic is very biting because it is true. In the book's **final lesson** it takes a position on the Gift of the Holy Spirit churches of Christ do not share. What the teacher has taught his student is an incorrect personal opinion – a deficiency that will not adequately arm him when called upon to defend his faith in any discussions with the ordinary charismatic believer in modern-day gifts.

Chapter 35: The Last Study

“I was always taught in the Baptist Church that Christ comes into you when you ask Him to forgive you of your sins and ask Him into your heart,” I responded. “But, Mr. Mike, you now know that the Bible doesn’t teach that. The gift of the Holy Spirit, eternal life, was promised only to those who repented and were baptized. It wasn’t promised to those who repented and asked Jesus into their hearts,” Randall repeated tirelessly. “Look one more time at the later part of Acts 2:38. ‘And ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.’ Who shall receive it and how shall they receive is the question?” I scanned back to the beginning of the verse: 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. “Mike, who received the gift of the Holy Ghost?” he asked me. “Those who repented and were baptized,” I answered.

“Now Mr. Mike, Paul said in Romans 6:22-23: But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. “In other words, those who repented and were baptized for the remission of sins, Acts 2:38, were promised to be given the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Romans 6:23 says, “but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. “And these those people didn’t step into the water thinking that they were already saved, either. If you get into the water of baptism thinking that your sins are forgiven before you get into the water, you’re not being baptized for the right reason. That’s not Bible baptism.”

“Alright,” I confessed, “Being baptized for the remission of your sins is the Bible way, but I’ve always thought that the gift of the Holy Ghost was a kind of miraculous gift to speak in tongues or something—“ “Yes,” Randall interrupted, “And many people think like you, but you have to study the Bible in context. Look here at Acts 2:39 because it helps reveal the context: 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. “Notice that the promise of the gift of the Holy Ghost is promised to all that are afar off. This speaks to everyone around the world and everyone throughout the ages to come. You see, we are those people that are afar off and when we obey the instructions of God we receive this same gift of promise Peter spoke of two thousand years ago. The gift of eternal life through Jesus. Now, I obeyed these words but I can’t speak in a foreign language miraculously, nor can I lay my hands on someone who is completely blind and restore their sight.

The gift of the Holy Ghost in this respect isn’t the miracles of the direct operation of the Spirit. It’s eternal life through Christ,” Randall said methodically in his explanation.

What is the Gift of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:38?

**What is the gift of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:38?
Do we receive it today?**

We read in Acts 2:38 “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.”

First, I do not know of any topic of discussion that has been more heavily discussed in the church today than the meaning of this last part of Acts 2:38. Some additional questions that we could ask about the gift of the Holy Spirit are as follows. Is this something that the Holy Spirit gives? Is this gift the Holy Spirit Himself? Was this promise made to all believers universally? Was this made only to those present at Pentecost? These are just some of the questions asked in regard to this short sentence.

Let’s look at the context. Jesus had ascended into heaven a few days earlier. He told His disciples to remain in Jerusalem (Acts 1:4). He said that they would receive power when the Holy Spirit would come upon them (Acts 1:8). In Acts 2:1 we see that the apostles were gathered in Jerusalem and the Holy Spirit came upon them and they spoke in other tongues. Now, many were standing by from many different nations who witnessed these miraculous events that the apostles performed. Some said that the apostles were drunk. However, Peter quotes prophecy that states that the Spirit would be “poured out” on all men (Acts 2:17) and that this was the fulfillment of that prophecy. In verse 33, Peter says that the promise of the Holy Ghost is what they now saw & heard. He goes on to tell them about the resurrection of Christ and their guilt for putting Jesus to death. Then, on account of the great guilt they have, the crowd interrupts Peter’s sermon when they ask what they need to do to be saved. Peter’s answer is for them to “repent and be baptized.”

He then states, “AND, ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” In other words just as the prophets had promised that the Holy Spirit would be poured out upon all men; just as they see the promise of the Holy Ghost being fulfilled in their eyes; they too could receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The gift of the Holy Ghost here is the miraculous indwelling of the Holy Spirit. There is no reason to conclude otherwise from the context. All references to the Holy Spirit prior to this were referring to the miraculous nature of the Holy Spirit. There is no reason to conclude in this context that the “gift” of the Holy Spirit is anything less than the miraculous manifestation of the Holy Spirit.

Now let’s turn to Acts 10:44-48. Here we find Peter speaking to Cornelius things that he needs to do to be saved. However, there was some doubt in the minds of the Jews present whether Gentiles could be saved. To affirm this fact, the Holy Spirit is sent upon Cornelius and all those in his house and they spake with tongues. This phrase that describes this miraculous manifestation of the Holy Spirit is found in verse 45. We read, “And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.” The same phrase, “the gift of the Holy Ghost” is used in this passage. It is clear in this passage it is referring to the miraculous. So “the gift of the Holy Ghost” in Acts 10 is the miraculous manifestation of the Spirit.

In Acts 11, Peter describes what happened to the house of Cornelius in the presence of other Jews. He states in verses 15-17, “And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?” Peter says a few things that indicate that the gift of the Holy Spirit that Cornelius and his house received was the same gift of the Holy Spirit that occurred in Acts 2. First, he says that “the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us, at the beginning.”

The significance of the phrase, “at the beginning” refers back to Acts chapter 2 and the events that happened therein. Second, he says, “God gave them the like gift.” He refers to the speaking in tongues as a “gift” like unto that which God gave “us.” The “us” in this context refers not only to the apostles, but also to all the brethren in Jerusalem (Acts 11:1). When did the brethren in Jerusalem receive this “gift?” When they repented and were baptized. So, the “gift of the Holy Spirit” in Acts 2:38 refers to the miraculous manifestation of the Holy Spirit.

Do we receive the “gift of the Holy Spirit” of Acts 2:38 today? No. We read in 1 Corinthians 13 that miracles were things that were going to be done away with when that which was perfect comes. That which was perfect (the complete revealed word of God) came. Therefore, the miracles were done away with.

Finally, an additional question arises regarding Acts 2:38. How can one say that baptism continues to be “for the remission of sins” if the “gift of the Holy Ghost” is no longer given? The construction of the English sentence does not necessarily imply that if one receives remission of sins, that therefore one MUST receive the gift of the Holy Spirit also. We use this construction in our language as well sometimes where one thing is a lasting benefit, whereas another thing is only a temporary benefit. For example, we have seen TV commercials where if you buy one product you receive another free. Can those who advertise say “Send in your money now and you will receive the product, plus an additional gift?” Now suppose you wait a year and call that place. You say you want the product. They say, however, that they no longer have the additional gift. You can understand that perfectly well because it has been so long since the offer was made. The same idea is present here. The “forgiveness of sins” is ongoing forever. You can get that by repenting and being baptized. However, the additional gift has expired & no longer comes with the original product. We do not have to say of necessity that just because one is offered the other has to be given as well. – *Church of Christ Articles*

What Is the Gift of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:38?

By [Wayne Jackson](#)

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To a multitude assembled on the day of Pentecost the apostle Peter declared:

“Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38, ASV).

The identity of “the gift of the Holy Spirit,” as that expression is used in Acts 2:38, has long been a matter of interesting discussion among Christians. Good and respected brothers hold differing viewpoints as to the meaning of the terminology employed in this passage.

Aside from the radical notion that this verse asserts the perpetuity of miraculous gifts throughout the Christian age — an allegation that would conflict with information elsewhere in the New Testament (cf. 1 Cor. 13:8ff; Eph. 4:8ff) — there is room for honest disagreement among the Lord's people on this matter, without there being a breach of fellowship.

At the outset, I would like to briefly discuss several concepts that brethren entertain regarding this matter, that I personally believe to be incorrect.

Salvation

Some argue that the “gift” of the Holy Spirit mentioned in this passage is a reference to salvation from past sins. But this theory appears to gloss the very language of the verse. It seems very clear to this writer “the gift of the Holy Spirit” is something **different from & in consequence of** the reception of the forgiveness of sins.

Note the dual use of the conjunction “and” in this context:

“Repent ye, **and** be baptized ... unto the remission of your sins; **and** ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

If baptism is different from repentance, should not a similar recognition be given to the distinction between salvation and the gift of the Holy Spirit?

Moreover, other passages also suggest that the reception of the Holy Spirit is a blessing given in consequence of salvation.

“And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (Gal. 4:6).

Miraculous Gifts

Some contend that the gift of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:38 was the reception of supernatural signs, as bestowed by the apostles' hands.

If such a view is correct, it would seem that a reasonable approach to the passage suggests that all who were baptized that day (cf. 2:41) received not only forgiveness of sins but also supernatural gifts. If this is the correct view, literally hundreds of disciples were performing miracles subsequently in the city of Jerusalem.

However, this interpretation suffers from the lack of any **supporting evidence** in the book of Acts. There is absolutely no indication, from Acts 2 through chapter 5, that anyone other than the apostles possessed miraculous gifts. Note the following:

“and fear came upon every soul; and many wonders and signs were done **through the apostles**” (Acts 2:43).

The miracle performed by Peter and John in Acts 3 seems to have been an unusual event; the Jewish leaders commented:

“for that indeed a notable miracle hath been wrought **through them**, is manifest to all that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it” (Acts 4:16).

There is no hint that multitudes of Christians were duplicating such signs in the city. Again:

“And by the **hands of the apostles** were many signs and wonders wrought among the people, and they were all with one accord in Solomon’s porch. But of the rest durst no man join himself to them; howbeit the people magnified them” (Acts 5:12-13).

The religious awe with which the multitudes held the **apostles** suggests they were doing signs **not characteristic** of the saints generally.

It is only when one comes to Acts 6:6ff that mention is made of the imposition of the apostles’ hands and the subsequent exercise of miraculous gifts by others (cf. Acts 6:8).

It has been suggested that the terms “gift” (**dorea**) and the verb “receive” (**lambano**) in Acts 2:38 indicate a miraculous phenomenon. Thus, it is asserted that this context denotes the supernatural gifts made available through the laying on of the apostles’ hands.

This is not a valid observation, and we can easily dispatch it by consulting a Greek concordance.

Compare, for example, **dorea** in John 4:10 and Romans 5:15, 17. In both cases, the “gift” is referring to something else other than miraculous gifts. And in John 12:48 and Mark 10:30, we find **lambano** (receiveth) being used to imply receiving something **other than miraculous gifts**. It simply is **not true** to assert that the language of Acts 2:38 restricts the gift or the reception thereof to miraculous gifts.

Moreover, the fact is, the **most common** Greek term for those gifts conveyed by the imposition of apostolic hands is the word **charisma** (cf. Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:4,9,28,30,31; 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6).

Some allege that Acts 2:38 is parallel with Mark 16:16ff because both sections promise salvation & the reception of miraculous signs. I personally do not believe that the passages are grammatically or contextually parallel in all respects. Mark 16:16ff contains a **general** declaration that miraculous gifts would accompany the body of believers, confirming their divinely given testimony.

On the other hand, the persons **directly addressed** in Acts 2:38 were **individually promised** both remission of sins & the gift of the Holy Spirit. It does not seem reasonable that they would have understood the promise to have been **unlimited** with reference to forgiveness but **limited** in regard to the gift of the Spirit.

The Word Only

Other good brethren hold that “the gift of the Holy Spirit” is merely a metaphorical expression suggesting that only the Spirit’s influence, by means of the inspired Word, indwells the Christian. In my opinion, this concept does not adequately explain all of the biblical data on this theme.

A frequent line of argument in support of this position is to assemble two lists of passages that show common effects produced by both the Spirit and the Word. This is, however, the fallacy of analogy. (Compare the Oneness Pentecostal argument listing similar traits relative to the Father & the Son.)

The fact that the Holy Spirit uses the Word as his instrument of instruction (Eph. 6:17), does not speak to the issue of whether or not he indwells the child of God.

The “Word only” view seems to fall under the weight of the context of Acts 2 as a whole. For example, in Acts 2:41 Luke records:

“They then that received his word were baptized ...”

Peter’s auditors on the day of Pentecost “gladly received his word” (v. 41), hence, the influence of the Spirit through that word, **before** their baptism. This is evidenced by their question, “What shall we do?” (v. 37), as well as an implied penitent disposition.

Yet the promised gift of the Spirit was given **after** baptism. Since the Spirit operated on the Pentecostians through the Word **prior** to their baptism, just what did they receive as a “gift” **after** their baptism?

The Indwelling Spirit

It is my conviction, as well as that of numerous highly esteemed brethren, that the Holy Spirit, as a “gift,” is bestowed upon the obedient believer (Acts 2:38; 5:32; 1 Cor. 6:19), and is an abiding presence in his life.

Let us consider several facets of this matter.

According to Acts 2:38, the baptized believer is promised “the gift of the Holy Spirit.” Is this a gift **consisting of** the Spirit, or a gift **given by** the Spirit?

Actually, from a strictly grammatical viewpoint, it could be either. Some, though, have suggested that grammatically the phrase cannot refer to the Spirit as a gift. That simply is not correct.

The expression **tou hagiou pneumatos** in Greek is in the genitive case. Greek grammar books list more than a dozen uses for the genitive¹. It is context, either in its narrower or broader sense, that will determine the thrust of the genitive case in a given circumstance.

The fact of the matter is, almost every Greek authority known to this writer contends that the genitive of Acts 2:38 is epexegetical (appositional), the Holy Spirit **is** the gift². These sources are not cited as theological experts, but as **language** authorities; the authors obviously did not feel that it is grammatically **impossible** for the gift to consist of the Spirit himself, as some have alleged.

That “the gift of the Holy Spirit” can be the Spirit himself is demonstrated by a comparison of Acts 10:45 with 10:47, even though the respective contexts reveal that different endowments of the Spirit are under consideration in Acts 2 and 10.

It is probably safe to say that most of the scholars within the restoration heritage have also argued this interpretation of “the gift of the Holy Spirit” in Acts 2:38, even when differing on the nature of receiving the Spirit.

J.W. McGarvey³ wrote:

“The expression means the Holy Spirit as a gift, and the reference is to that indwelling of the Holy Spirit by which we bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, and without which we are not of Christ.”

Moses Lard⁴ commented: “Certainly the gift of the Spirit is the Spirit itself given.”

Supporting Evidence

The most forceful argument for this view that the “gift” of the Spirit is the Spirit himself, is the subsequent testimony of the New Testament regarding the reception of the Holy Spirit by the believer. Note the following.

The Holy Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit

Within the Roman letter, in a context which discusses the indwelling Spirit as a possession of the saints (cf. Rom. 8:9,11,16,26,27), the apostle Paul declares that the Holy Spirit and the human spirit bear dual witness to the fact that we are children of God (v. 16).

Does our spirit actually dwell within us?

Some would suggest that only the Holy Spirit's influence through the Word is here considered. Notice, though, it is the indwelling Spirit **himself** who bears testimony with us (see also 8:26).

Compare the language of John 4:2 where it is stated that while the Lord representatively baptized disciples, he "himself baptized not." There is a difference between what one does **himself** and what he accomplishes through an agent

Our body, the temple of the Holy Spirit

Paul inquired of the Corinthian saints:

"Or know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body" (1 Cor. 6:19).

The Greek word for "temple" is **naos**, and it is an allusion to that holy sanctuary of the Mosaic economy wherein God actually made his presence known (cf. Ex. 25:22).

Here is an interesting question. If the Holy Spirit bears a relationship to men today **only** "through the Word," and yet, admittedly, he influences the alien sinner through the Word, would it be proper to suggest the sinner's body is "the temple of the Holy Spirit" to whatever extent he is affected by the Word?

Christians made to drink of one Spirit

Consider 1 Corinthians 12:13.

"For in one Spirit [i.e., the Spirit's operation by means of the gospel] were we all baptized into one body ... and [an additional thought] were all made to drink of one Spirit."

What is the difference in the Spirit's relationship to us **before** baptism and **after** baptism? In Paul's dual references to the Spirit in this passage, is he suggesting the identical concept in both statements?

The Holy Spirit sent into our hearts

In Galatians 4:6, the Spirit is said to be sent into our hearts **because we are** (i.e., in consequence of being) sons of God. Would not this suggest a relationship that is different from the mere influence of the Word, since the sinner has the leading of the Word **before** he becomes a child of God?

The “earnest” of the Spirit promised to Christians only

If the relationship of the Holy Spirit is exactly the same to both sinner and saint (i.e., only through the Word), can it be affirmed that the sinner, to whatever extent that he is influenced by the Word, has the “earnest of the Spirit” (2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5; cf. Eph. 1:13,14)? Do not these passages, and those above, set forth a precious promise that is exclusively confined to the Christian?

Points to Consider

Sincere respected brethren believe that there are strong arguments that negate the idea that the Spirit personally indwells the child of God. We will consider several of these.

Is the Spirit divided?

It is argued that if the Holy Spirit actually dwelt in all Christians, he would be divided. If we may kindly say so, this constitutes a rather materialistic view of deity.

The fact of the matter is, the apostles of Christ were filled with the Spirit of God (Acts 2:4), and yet, the Spirit was still one (cf. 1 Cor. 12:9).

It is countered, though, that the Holy Spirit did not actually dwell in the apostles. Rather, it is alleged, the Spirit was only with them in the sense that they were miraculously endowed with divine power.

However, it must be noted that the apostles had the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit before the day of Pentecost (cf. Mt 10:8; 12:28). This is obviously what the Lord had in mind when he affirmed that the Spirit was “with” (**para**) those disciples; yet additionally, the Savior promised, “he shall be in (**en**) you” (Jn. 14:17).

In view of this passage, how can it possibly be argued that the Holy Spirit cannot be in a person?

Would the indwelling of the Spirit make one deity?

It has been suggested that if the Holy Spirit actually dwelt in someone that would be a form of “incarnation,” hence, the person would be deity. This is an erroneous assumption. The Spirit was in the apostles (Acts 2:4), but they were not deity. Peter refused to be worshipped as though he was a divine being (Acts 10:26).

In an incarnation, deity **becomes** flesh (cf. Jn. 1:14), but such is not the case when the Spirit simply indwells the believer’s body. When God called to Moses “out of the midst” of a bush (Ex. 3:4), that did not imply that the bush was divine.

Does the indwelling Spirit demand miraculous powers?

Others would contend that if the Holy Spirit personally dwells in the Christian then he would be able to perform miracles. The connection is unwarranted. John the Baptist performed no miracles (Jn. 10:41), and yet he was “filled with the Holy Spirit **even from his mother’s womb**” (Lk. 1:15).

Incidentally, the preposition “from” in this passage is the Greek term **ek** meaning from the inside to the outside, thus suggesting that John was filled with the Spirit **even while in his mother’s womb**. This certainly excludes the notion that the Holy Spirit can dwell in one **only** through the agency of the Word.

What about the Samaritans?

It is further argued that even though the Samaritans had been baptized (Acts 8:12), they had not received the Holy Spirit (8:16), hence, there is no indwelling of the Spirit at the point of baptism.

This assertion, however, overlooks a very important phrase in verse 16. The text states:

“for as yet it was fallen upon none of them: **only they had been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.**”

Why did not the sentence conclude with the words, “as yet it was fallen upon none of them” if absolutely no reception of the Spirit was being affirmed? Certainly such would have been sufficient to complete that thought.

Rather, a qualifying clause is added: “only (*monon de* — literally, ‘but only’) they had been baptized ...” Thus, the sense likely is: “for as yet it had fallen upon none of them: but only (in the manner bestowed when) they had been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.”

This compares well with the promise of the Spirit at the time of one’s baptism “in the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 2:38).

Concerning Acts 8:16, McGarvey⁶ notes:

“previous to the arrival of Peter and John the Holy Spirit had fallen **with its miraculous powers** on none of the Samaritans.”

God and Christ indwelling the Christian

It is contended that both God and Christ are said to dwell in us, though they do not actually inhabit our bodies. So, similarly, is the case with the Spirit.

However, we are expressly told that God dwells in us **by means of the Spirit**. Paul says the Ephesians were “a habitation of God in the Spirit” (Eph. 2:22), and John affirms, “we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he gave us” (1 Jn. 3:24; cf. 4:13).

Benefits of the Spirit’s Indwelling

There are residual benefits to acknowledging the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian. Let us consider a couple of these.

The Confident Life

Every child of God is painfully aware of his inability to live perfectly before his Creator (cf. Rom. 7:14ff). Frequently, we have deep spiritual needs of which we are not even aware. We ought not to despair, however, for:

“the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity: for we know not how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered” (Rom. 8:26).

There are several important truths affirmed in this passage:

- We have needs which we do not adequately know how to address.
- In this regard, the Spirit continually helps us (literally, constantly bears the load with us).
- This assistance he “himself” (personally) provides.
- He takes our unutterable groanings and, by his ongoing intercessory activity, conveys our needs to the Father.
- God, who searches the hearts (where the Spirit abides — Gal. 4:6), perceives the “mind of the Spirit” — and responds to our needs consistent with his own will (cf. Rom. 8:27).

What a thrilling concept of the Spirit’s activity in our lives. Moses Lard has a wonderful discussion on this passage in his *Commentary on Romans*⁷.

Holiness

The Greek world into which Christianity was born tended to deprecate the human body. There was a proverbial saying, “The body is a tomb.” Epictetus said, “I am a poor soul shackled to a corpse.”

That concept accommodated a fleshly mode of living. Since only the soul was important, and not the body, one could give himself wantonly to the indulgences of the flesh.

It is this factor that certainly lies behind Paul’s rebuke of carnal indulgence in the church at Corinth. The body is not to be given over to fornication (1 Cor. 6:13ff). One of the apostle’s effective arguments for the sanctity of the Christian’s body is that the Holy Spirit indwells that body as the temple of God, hence, those saints were to glorify the Father in their bodies (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

We are confident that an awareness of the Spirit’s abiding presence can be a powerful motivation to godly living. J.D. Thomas⁸ has noted that the doctrine

“of the personal indwelling of the Spirit and a strong providential activity aids our own spiritual development towards its highest potential. Though the age of miracles is over, spiritual relationships and spiritual activities are not over! The awareness that the third member of the Godhead personally and actually dwells within us is a tremendous incentive to holiness.”

Conclusion

In affirming that the Holy Spirit dwells within the child of God, one need not suggest

- that miracles are performed today,
- that the Spirit “guides” or “illuminates” us in some way apart from the Scriptures,
- that he operates directly upon the saint’s heart.

The fact of the Spirit’s indwelling is a different issue altogether from the various modes of his operation as such were effected in the apostolic age.

A word of caution would appear to be in order as to the manner in which this controversy is addressed in our speaking and writing. Though most Christians acknowledge that this particular issue is not a matter of “fellowship,” some, when addressing viewpoints that differ from their own, do so in a very condescending and caustic fashion. We do not believe that such a disposition is in the interest of candid investigation. Let us approach subjects of this type with a spirit of mutual respect and kindly accord.

NOTE: I DO NOT ENTIRELY AGREE WITH BROTHER JACKSON IN THIS ARTICLE WHEN HE ADDRESSES THE HOLY SPIRIT IN IT’S MODERN MANIFESTATION. AS I HAVE WRITTEN ON THE SUBJECT PREVIOUS - I BELIEVE THE POST-APOSTOLIC INDWELLING RELATIONSHIP OF THE FAITHFUL CHRISTIAN TO THE HOLY SPIRIT IS AN INFILLING FELLOWSHIP. - dlb

<http://www.churchofchristatmemorial.com/bible-study/david-burris-articles/2019/05/13/making-room-for-the-spirit-to-infill>

