

Pleasant Valley
Church of Christ

3317 Amidon
Wichita KS 67204
(316) 838-4195
www.letjesusleadus.org

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Classes 9:30 am
Worship 10:30 am
Evening 6:00 pm

Wednesday

Classes 7:30 pm

The Pleasant Valley Church of Christ is a non-denominational group of believers who are committed to following Jesus in our attitudes, our relationships, and our worship. If you want the same thing in your life, please contact us. We'd like to help.

Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotations are from the New King James Version Bible, Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Wings



*"But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles" (Isaiah 40:31)*

May 3, 2009

The gift of the Holy Spirit

by David King

"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" (Ac. 2:38).

Among our brethren, there exists some disagreement over what "the gift of the Holy Spirit" is in this passage. There are two dominant positions: One holds that this gift is the blessing of salvation and all the benefits that flow from it, promised in the Spirit-inspired word. The other believes that the gift is the Holy Spirit himself, a guest that resides quietly in the heart of every believer, not miraculously, but merely as a token of our salvation.

Both sides marshal an array of Scriptural evidence for their positions, but both sides, I am convinced, miss the most obvious line of evidence — the context itself. What did this promise mean to the people who originally heard it? The Jews who were listening to Peter's sermon did not have access to a New Testament that they could quickly thumb through to find other passages about the Holy Spirit. It had to have some meaning to them right then and there, without requiring a lot of background research to make sense of it. What it meant for them, is what it should mean for us. And there is plenty of evidence right in chapter two to determine that meaning.

First, recall what these people had just witnessed. They had heard a mighty rushing wind, and tongues of fire coming to rest upon each apostle (v. 3-4). The apostles began speaking in languages that were not their own (v. 6-12). This was the Holy Spirit coming upon the apos-

ties, as Jesus had promised earlier (1:8). The crowd, of course, had no way of knowing that at the moment they witnessed it.

However, Peter soon made it clear what was happening. He explained that these signs were the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams" (v. 17). Near the end of his sermon, he again spelled out the source of what they had seen: "Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear" (v. 33). Less than one minute later, he extended the promise of "the gift of the Holy Spirit" to the audience.

Now, if you were in that audience, what would **you** think Peter was talking about?

The contextual evidence is overwhelming that the "gift of the Holy Spirit" is simply the miraculous spiritual gifts that are described in much greater detail in Ac. 8:15-20 and 1 Cor. 12-14. This conclusion is strengthened by noting that the phrase "gift of the Holy Spirit" is used one other time in the New Testament (Ac. 10:45) to describe the miraculous gift of the Spirit to the household of Cornelius.

Peter did not take the time to explain the details (duration, manner of imparting, etc.). That would come later. But if we're willing to let the Bible speak for itself, this view is the simplest and most reasonable.