The Gift Of The Spirit Was The Ability To Work Miracles

Intro: There are several views concerning the last phrase of Acts 2:38 “38Then 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.” Those who hold to the personal indwelling view and the view that it means salvation are highly respected brethren. None of these views have been considered a fellowship matter. They do not affect our respect for God’s Word, our worship, how we live our lives in service to God or anything which would affect our soul’s salvation. All these views hold that the only way the Spirit works on the heart of man is through the Word (Eph. 6:17 “17And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:”). When someone advocates a direct work of the Spirit on the heart of man in conviction, conversion, or sanctification, then it does become a fellowship issue. Or if any were advocating present day miraculous activity of the Spirit, it would be a fellowship matter.

I. THIS VIEW IS NOT ALL THAT STRANGE

A. My first encounter with this view:
   1. Amazement
   2. Could not believe a Gospel preacher would hold such a view.
   3. Thus, I did not come to this conclusion easily.
   4. After coming to this position, I learned it is not that unusual.
B. Other highly respected brethren hold this view.
   1. Truth is not determined by who holds a view and who does not.
   2. To counteract that this is new or novel notice some who have presented this view.
C. Franklin Camp
   1. He quotes Alexander Campbell as saying both Acts 2:38 and 10:45 are miraculous in scope.
   3. David Lipscomb said that it is possibly the miraculous manifestation of the Spirit.
   4. Camp quotes H. Leo Boles as saying that this is what Peter meant.
D. More recent days:
   1. Guy N. Woods stated that was his understanding and that he had set the position forth in public writing.

II. MODERN-DAY MIRACLES

A. Many, upon hearing this, think that it offers support for and/or advocates present-day (fake) miracles.
   1. Those holding this position are opposed to the modern-day miracle-working frauds (which includes all those who claim to work miracles today).
   2. Surely no one would think of accusing those men just named as believing in modern-day miracles.
B. The age of miracles has ended.
   1. There is no purpose for miracles today.
      a. The purpose of miracles was basically to confirm the Word.
         (1) Mark 16:20 "And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."
         (2) Heb. 2:1-4 "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"
      b. This confirmation would include inspiration and revelation of that Word.
      c. We have the completed revelation of God’s Word today, thus no need for miracles today.
   2. There is no means for miracles today.
      a. Only two cases of people receiving miraculous powers directly from God:
         (1) Apostles
         (2) House of Cornelius.
      b. Everyone else received that power indirectly.
         (1) They had to have the apostles lay hands on them.
         (2) Acts 8
      c. Since there are no apostles today, there could be no miracles today.
   3. Statements of the Bible
      a. 1 Cor. 13:8-13 "Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."
      b. Eph. 4:7-16 "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

C. Apostles:
   1. They were there on the day of Pentecost
   2. It was the time of miraculous activity.
   3. They could lay hands on others to impart miraculous power.
4. The statement we are studying was said (and later written) during this time and not the 21st century.

III. CONTEXT
A. Context is important to any understanding.
   1. Statement: “A verse taken out of its context becomes a pretext.”
   2. Consideration as to those who heard it.
      a. Some suggest that we approach it as to the natural conclusions we should draw.
      b. Seems better to put on “first-century glasses” and see how those who heard it would understand it.
      c. It might not always be correct, but would more than likely be correct.
B. Background
   1. Luke 24:46-47 “46And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: 47And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”
      a. Repentance and remission of sins are to be preached.
      b. It was to begin at Jerusalem.
      c. This is repeated in Acts 1
   2. Acts 1:
      a. Promise of Holy Spirit baptism to the apostles; Acts 1:4-5 “4And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. 5For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.”
      b. Apostles would receive power; Acts 1:8 “8But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”
      c. Luke records the death of Judas and the selection of Matthias to take his place.
C. Acts 2
   1. The fulfilment of what Jesus promised His apostles; Acts 2:1-4 “1And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. 4And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”
   2. There is a gathering of the crowd
      a. Acts 2:6 “6Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.”
      b. The reason the crowd gathers is because of the miraculous events taking place.
   3. Peter’s sermon:
      a. He informs the crowd what was taking place which was the fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy.
         (1) Acts 2:17-21 “17And 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: 18And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: 19And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: 20The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great
and notable day of the Lord come: 21And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

(2) Much of this deals specifically with the miraculous:
(a) pouring out of the Spirit
(b) prophesying
(c) visions
(d) dreaming dreams
(e) wonders
(f) signs

(3) The apostles were the only ones performing the miracles, but not the only ones under consideration in Joel’s prophecy:
(a) all flesh
(b) sons
(c) daughter
(d) young men
(e) old men
(f) servants
(g) handmaidens

(4) The pouring out of the Spirit in Joel included more than just the baptism of the Spirit which was limited to the apostles.

b. Proves Jesus is God manifested in the flesh.
c. Convicts the Jews of their sin in crucifying God’s Son.
d. They realize their sin and ask what they must do; Acts 2:37 “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?”
e. Peter’s response; 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.”
(1) Repent
(2) Be baptized
(3) Promised remission of sins
(4) Promised the gift of the Holy Spirit.

4. Considering what had taken place:
(a) Spirit coming on the apostles
(b) Apostles demonstration of miraculous powers
(c) Promise of the pouring out of the Spirit upon all flesh
(d) When they hear “the gift of the Holy Ghost,” how could they think of anything other than miraculous?
(e) If Peter wanted to convey something other than miraculous powers, he would have expressed his thoughts differently.

IV. THE WORDS
A. Gift
1. It is from the Greek δώρεα (dorea)
2. It is used 6 times in connection with the Holy Spirit.
   a. It is used other times but not in connection with the Spirit.
   b. Acts 2:38 is the first usage.
3. Acts 8:20 a. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.”
   b. The Samaritans had been converted by Philip’s preaching who had performed miracles.
   c. Peter and John were sent to impart miraculous powers to them by the laying on of their hands.
   d. Simon saw through the laying on of the apostle’s hands miraculous powers were imparted to others.
   e. Simon offered money to Peter to have the power to impart miracles other someone else.
   f. “Gift of God” refers to the ability to impart miraculous power to another person.
4. Acts 10:45 a. 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.”
   b. The conversion of Cornelius and those at his house.
   c. Peter ir rehearsing what took place at Cornelius’ house.
   d. They had received a “like gift” in that they received miraculous ability to speak in tongues.
   e. There is no doubt this is miraculous.
5. Acts 11:17 a. 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?”
   b. They had received a “like gift” in that they received miraculous ability to speak in tongues.
   c. They received that power directly from God.
   d. “Gift” is miraculous.
6. Eph. 3:7 a. Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.”
   b. Context shows that this is miraculous in nature.
   c. Eph. 3:3 a. How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,”
   (1) This revelation came by direct miraculous power.
   (2) Gal. 1:11-12 “11But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. 12For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.”
   c. Eph. 3:5 a. Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;”
   (1) The mystery of Christ has been revealed to the apostles and prophets as they speaking by the Spirit.
   (2) They received and spoke by the Spirit.
   (3) This is a miraculous nature of the Spirit.
   d. Paul was made a minister which is his apostleship.
   e. “The gift of the grace of God was the apostolic gift of the Spirit he received as an apostle.
f. “The effectual working of his power” is the miraculous power belonging to Paul.
g. “Gift” used for miraculous powers.
7. Eph. 4:7 “But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.”
   a. The grace that has been given
      (1) It is the same as “gave gifts unto men;” Eph. 4:8 “Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.”
      (2) It is a summation of the miraculous gifts of Eph. 4:11 “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;”
   b. He did this when He ascended up on high by sending the Spirit to the apostles; cf. John 16:7 “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.”
      (1) The going away
         (a) It is the same as “ascending up on high; Eph. 4:8 “When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.”
         (b) It is the same as “ascended;” Eph. 4:9 “(Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?”
         (c) It is the same as “ascended up” Eph. 4:10 “He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)”
      (2) The sending of the Comforter:
         (a) It is the same as “that he might fill all things;” Eph. 4:10 “He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)”
         (b) It is the same as “grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ;” Eph. 4:7 “But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.”
   c. Paul is dealing with the miraculous powers which Christ gave to some when He ascended back to heaven.
8. Every passage where δωρεά (dorea) is used in association with the Spirit it refers to the miraculous so why assign a different meaning in our text?
B. Receive.
1. It is from the Greek λαμβάνω (lambano).
2. When used several times relating to the Holy Spirit and carries the idea of the miraculous.
3. John 7:39 “(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)”
   a. This is the first time “receive” is used regarding the Spirit.
   b. It is point to Pentecost and the miraculous power of the Spirit would be given to the apostles.
4. John 20:21-23 “Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.”
   a. This is John’s record of the Great Commission
   b. It promises inspiration (miraculous powers) to the apostles.
5. Acts 8:15-17 "15Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: "16(For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) "17Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost."
   a. Philip went to Samaria and preached the Gospel to them.
   b. After they obeyed, the apostles sent Peter and John to Samaria.
   c. Here it refers to the Samaritans receiving miraculous powers by the apostles laying hands on them.
   d. Franklin Camp wrote: “This is the first time anyone is said to have received the Holy Spirit since Acts 2. I do not mean that others had not received miraculous endowments before this, because they certainly had. Philip could not have preached and performed miracles in Samaria without a miraculous endowment. What I am saying is that this is the first time the Bible specifically mentions someone receiving the Holy Spirit since Acts 2. The first recorded instance after Acts 2 of someone receiving the Holy Spirit was a miraculous reception. It is well also to keep in mind that this is an instance of Christians receiving the Holy Spirit during the period of the miraculous” (140).

6. Acts 10:47 “47Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?”
   a. This has already been discussed as being miraculous in nature.
   b. Cornelius had miraculous power given directly by God enabling them to speak in tongues.

7. Acts 19
   a. Paul asked them, Acts 19:2 “2He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.”
   b. Paul then asks, Acts 19:3 “3And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John’s baptism.”
   c. After his teaching they were baptized in the name of Christ; Acts 19:5 “5When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.”
   d. Paul laid hands on them and imparted the Holy Spirit.
      (1) This is miraculous power because they spoke with tongues and prophesied.
      (2) Acts 19:6 “6And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.”
   e. Thus, when Paul asked if they had “received” the Spirit, he was referring to miraculous powers.

8. Gal. 3:2 “2This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?”
   a. Context shows this is miraculous powers which they had received through the apostles laying hands on them.
   b. This power to impart miraculous powers to them proved:
      (1) Paul’s apostleship.
      (2) Christianity is superior to Judaism and they should not return to Judaism.
   c. Gal. 3:5 “5He therefore that ministereth [supplieth—ASV] to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?”
      (1) Paul supplied the Spirit, miraculous powers, to them by laying on of his hands.
They did not receive miraculous powers from Judaizing teachers but from Paul.

9. 1 John 2:27 “But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.”
   a. This anointing was of a miraculous nature.
   b. They did not need any man to teach them because they were inspired.
      (1) They possessed miraculous gifts enabling them to know and teach the truth.
      (2) Those spiritual gifts were in the early church for that purpose until God’s revelation was complete.

10. In these seven cases receiving the Spirit refers to the miraculous.
    a. Why would we think something different in our text?
    b. If God is wanting to express the miraculous, why would He not use the terms He used here.

C. Franklin Camp wrote, “Put together the six times the word ‘gift’ is used with the eight times the Bible speaks of people ‘receiving the Spirit,’ and my conviction is that the ‘gift of the Spirit’ means miraculous, as established by the Bible. If these arguments do not prove it, I must confess that I do not know how to prove anything by the Bible” (147).

V. THE PHRASE

A. The Bible is its own best commentary.
   1. We have used this approach in dealing with the denominational world.
   2. When we find the phrase in Acts 2:38 found in another place, then it would give good evidence that what it means at that location is what it means in Acts 2:38.
   3. “Remission of sins”
      a. 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.”
      b. Mat. 26:28 “For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”
      c. We prove that “for” in Acts 2:38 is looking forward to and not because of by showing the meaning in Matthew 26:28.
      d. Many who use this argument with denominations will object to its use when applied to “the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

B. “The gift of the Holy Spirit” is found twice.
   1. 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.”
   2. Acts 10:45 “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.”

C. Acts 10 is miraculous.
   1. Peter goes to the house of Cornelius as instructed by God.
   2. Cornelius rehearses the events leading up to the sending for Peter.
   3. Peter begins preaching the Gospel to them.
   4. Acts 10:44-46 “While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. 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. "For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God."

a. The Holy Spirit fell on the Gentiles.
b. The Gentiles had the gift of the Spirit poured out on them.
c. The Gentiles were able to speak with tongues.
d. The power to speak in tongues proves that the "gift of the Holy Ghost" was miraculous in nature.

D. Since it is miraculous in Acts 10:45, there is no reason to think it is anything else in Acts 2:38.
   1. They are the same with one exception.
   2. Cornelius had miraculous powers given directly from God; those on Pentecost would have the laying on of the hands of the apostles to receive them.

VI. Parallel Passages

A. Some argue:
   1. If this position is true, then miracles would also be for today.
   2. Since repentance and baptism is valid today for the remission of sins, and one does that, then they must also receive miraculous powers.

B. Mark 16 and Acts 2
   1. Mark 16:15-20  "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."
      a. They were to preach the Gospel
      b. The hearers needed to believe
      c. The hearers were to be baptized
      d. Those who believed and were baptized would receive salvation (that is salvation from past sins)
      e. Miracles would follow

2. Acts 2
   a. The Holy Spirit comes upon the apostles (Acts 2:1-4)
   b. The crowd gathers (Acts 2:5-13)
   c. Peter explains this is the fulfilling of Joel’s prophecy (Acts 2:14-21)
   d. Peter preaches the Gospel to them; instills faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God (Acts 2:22-36).
   e. They demonstrate their faith and conviction of sin when they ask what they needed to do (Acts 2:37).
   f. Peter instructs them to repent and be baptized to obtain the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).
   g. They would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).
3. Notice the comparison:
   a. Preach the Gospel — Peter preached the Gospel
   b. Believe — hearers were brought to belief
   c. Not in Mark (but in Luke) their need to repent — told they needed to repent
   d. Be baptized — they were told they needed to be baptized.
   e. Would be saved — would have the remission of sins (salvation from past sins)
   f. Miracles would follow — receive the gift of the Holy Spirit
4. Robert Taylor wrote, “In Acts 2:38 people are promised remission of sins upon meeting the specified conditions of repentance and baptism. Then they are promised the miraculous gift of the Spirit enabling them to perform what was promised in Mark 16:17-18” (182).

C. Acts 3:19 and Acts 2:38
   1. Acts 3:19 “19Repent ye therefore, and be converted [turn again—ASV], that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;”
   2. Both passages (Acts 2 then Acts 3):
      a. Command to repent — command to repent.
      b. Command to be baptized — command to be converted.
      c. Promise of forgiveness of sins — sins blotted out
      d. Receive the gift of the Holy Spirit — times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.
3. Personal indwelling:
   a. They contend that the Spirit does nothing for them except through the Word.
   b. They admit that the only way they know He is in them is through the Word.
   c. Thus, how could such be a time of refreshing from the Lord? It offers no blessings to the Christian.
   d. Guy N. Woods says that it “(a) gives them no awareness of his presence, (b) teaches them no truth, (c) offers them no protection against accepting error; (d) and requires them to resort to a book nineteen hundred years old to learn his will through study when he is actually there and in direct contact with the heart (understanding) at the time!” (56).
4. Makes sense if it is referring to miraculous powers imparted by the laying on of the apostles hands.

VII. “GIFT OF ...”
   A. “Gift of Person”
      1. When dealing with a person’s name and not a thing or object.
      2. It never means that the person named in the phrase is the gift given.
   B. “Gift of God”
      1. Ecc. 3:13 “13And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God.”
      2. Ecc. 5:19 “19Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour; this is the gift of God.”
3. **John 4:10** "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.”

4. **Acts 8:20** "But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.”

5. **Rom. 6:23** "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

6. **1 Cor. 7:7** “For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.”

7. **Eph. 2:8** "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:”

8. **2 Tim. 1:6** “Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.”

9. In each of these the gift is always something God gives, never God himself.

C. “Gift of Christ”

1. **Eph. 4:7** “But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.”

2. It is something Christ gives.

3. Christ himself is not the gift.

D. “Gift of the Holy Spirit”

1. **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.”

2. **Acts 10:45** “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.”

3. Once in plural “gifts”; **Heb. 2:4** “God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?”

4. In these the Holy Spirit is not the gift unless Acts 2:38 is the exception.

E. “Gift” used with a pronoun.

1. There are many times we find “gift” with a pronoun (“their gifts,” “your gifts,” “their own gifts,” etc.).

2. Never does the phrase mean that the person is the gift.

F. Anytime “gift of [person]” is used, then it is always that the person is giving a gift, not that the person is the gift.

VIII. **Acts 2:39** "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.”

A. What is the promise?

1. Some believe:
   a. Salvation
   b. Abrahamic promise

2. Seems more consistent to view it as applying to Joel’s prophecy.
   a. This meets the context
   b. Meets what the people’s expectations would be from what has been said.
3. The only other time “promise” is used in Acts 2.
   a. Acts 2:33 “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.”
      (1) This is an obvious reference to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon
      the apostles.
      (2) It has reference back to the prophecy of Joel with which Peter began his
      sermon (Acts 2:16-21).
      (3) It is what the apostles were promised; Acts 1:4
      (4) It is what the apostles received; Acts 2:1-4
   b. Joel’s prophecy was not limited to the apostles.
   c. The apostles must receive the baptism of the Spirit to fulfill the rest of the
      prophecy.

4. With this as the context, why would we understand the “promise” to be anything
   but miraculous?

B. Parallel with Joel’s prophecy (Acts 2:16-21, 39).
   1. Joel’s “your sons and your daughters” is the same as “your children.”
      a. Some want to make the “your children” a perpetual promise.
      b. Contrast this with when Joel wants to show a continued nature; Joel 1:3 “Tell
         ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another
         generation.”
         (1) If Joel meant this as a unending promise he would not have simply said
         your sons and daughters
         (2) He would have taken it to another generation.
   2. Contrast this with Luke 23:28 “But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem,
      weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.”
      a. How is this any different from Peter’s statement?
      b. “yourselves, and for your children” with “you and to your children” are the
         same.
   3. The promise is to only the next generation or their immediate children.

C. “As many as the Lord our God shall call.”
   1. Many equate this with Christians of all time.
   2. “Call” is often equated with the Gospel call; 2 Thes. 2:14 “Whereunto he called you
      by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
   3. The two “calls” are not from the same word.
      a. In Thessalonians it is from the Greek καλέω (kaleo), which is the Gospel call
         or call to salvation.
      b. In Acts it is from the Greek προσκαλέω (proskaleomai).
   4. The “call” in Acts is a restrictive call.
      a. Swanson states, “call to a task.”
      b. Arndt writes, “call to a special task or office.”
c. Acts 13:1-2 “Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work wherewith I have called them.”

(1) There is a larger group (6 prophets and teachers).
(2) “Called” refers to the smaller group who would be going to the Gentiles (Barnabas and Saul).

d. Acts 16:10 “And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.”

(1) Paul and Luke were appointed for the work in Macedonia.
(2) They had already been called to salvation, now being called to this task or office.

e. Price and Cosby write, “The basic meaning of the term is ‘to call to oneself’ and is used thirty times in the New Testaments, but never to refer to the calling of a sinner to Salvation—UNLESS ACTS 2:39 IS THE ONLY EXCEPTION! If all other twenty-nine occurrences are never so used, and if the call to salvation normally uses the word kaleo, is it not probable that something other than a call to salvation is under consideration in Acts 2:39?”

f. This would be a limited call of those who had received salvation and now being called to receive miraculous powers (the ones the apostles lay hands on).

5. “As many as” also denotes a smaller more select group than the larger group.

a. Price and Cosby state, “An interesting feature about this word is that it is used to denote a smaller, more select group being contemplated, whenever it is found in combination with a larger group.”

b. They give three examples (Mat. 22:9, John 1:12, and Acts 4:34)

c. Price and Cosby state again, “there are two groups under consideration—a larger and a smaller—with the term ‘as many as’ designating the smaller, more restricted group. Likewise in Acts 2:39 there are two groups under consideration: those bidden and those not bidden by God.”

6. Those bidden by God are those who will receive miraculous powers by the apostles laying hands on them (the smaller group).

Conclusion: This is harmonious with everything within the context. It harmonizes with the words found elsewhere in the Scriptures. It harmonizes with the phrases found in the Bible. It harmonizes with the time-frame of the first century and the apostles presence to impart miraculous powers. While the other views of this passage do no damage to God’s Word, this understanding is the most reasonable view one can hold.