

The Significance of Acts 2:38

Acceptance or Obedience?

The Necessity of the Holy Ghost

Part I:
The Significance of Acts 2:38

Why is Acts 2:38 so important?

A valid question sometimes asked is, “Why is Acts 2:38 so important as a salvation scripture?” or “Why not use Matthew 28:19, John 3:16, Acts 16:31, or the ‘Roman Road’ to tell someone how to be saved?” This study deals with this very important issue.

Background to the second chapter of Acts

In order to properly understand the significance of Acts 2:38, one must first have a fundamental understanding of the background preceding the verse. It is imperative that you understand that *the Holy Ghost had not yet been given* prior to the second chapter of Acts. This is clearly stated in 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.) (John 7:39)

While it is true that there were special cases of people who had the Spirit “move upon them” in the Old Testament and even those who received the Holy Ghost for special purposes (John the Baptist, for example) in the New Testament, the Holy Ghost had not yet been poured out *on all flesh*. It was not yet available to all.

Some will argue that Jesus’ disciples already had the Holy Ghost prior to Pentecost, and the verse commonly used to support this view is John 20:22:

And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:

However, it must be clearly understood that this is a command from Jesus, not a statement – and His disciples fulfilled this command on the day of Pentecost when they actually received the Holy Ghost.

In Luke’s version of what happened in John 20:22, we find the following words:

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. (Luke 24:49)

There is more abundant evidence that the disciples did not have the Holy Ghost until the Day of Pentecost. For example, if Peter had already received the Holy Ghost prior to Pentecost, he would not have denied Jesus. He would have had the power that Jesus promised

in Acts 1:8, and the boldness that enabled him to preach to the crowd on the Day of Pentecost *after* he received the Holy Ghost. Furthermore, the other disciples would not have forsaken Jesus had they already possessed the power that the Holy Ghost gives.

Note the words of Jesus before He ascended:

But 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. (Acts 1:8)

Why would Jesus make such a statement if his disciples already had the Holy Ghost? Furthermore, why even tarry (or wait) at Jerusalem if they already had the Holy Ghost? What were they waiting for?

The Day of Pentecost

1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

*4 And they were **all** filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts 2:1-4)*

Note that they (the 120 in the upper room) were all filled with the Holy Ghost. The infilling was not selective; every one of the 120 was filled. This is contrary to modern doctrines which teach that the Holy Ghost is an added blessing given to certain saved people. The Bible never makes this distinction; it automatically assumes that everyone who is saved has the Holy Ghost, and vice versa. The Holy Ghost is not something reserved for a spiritual few; it is for everyone. Acts 5:32 tells us that the Holy Ghost is given to all them who obey Him.

The outpouring in Acts 2 was as the Spirit gave them utterance. This is important because some teach that tongues are “of the devil,” but the Bible teaches that true tongues come from the Spirit, so any connection between such tongues and the devil is dangerously close to blasphemy.

Note that it was not as the Spirit *uttered*, but as

the Spirit *gave them utterance*. Some people never receive the Holy Ghost because they are waiting on the Holy Ghost to do the uttering, and they are afraid they will say something on their own. However, though it is still your vocal chords that speak, it is the Spirit that tells you what to say.

*And there were dwelling at Jerusalem
Jews, devout men, out of every nation
under heaven. (Acts 2:5)*

Key Point: Those who heard Peter's sermon that day were devout men out of every nation under heaven!

God chose this day (the day of Pentecost) for a specific reason. The feast of Pentecost was a celebration of the completion of the wheat and barley harvests, and people were finally finished harvesting their crops. During Pentecost they brought the first fruits to the temple in Jerusalem for tithes. There was a great multitude of people present here, much more than on most other days, and God chose this day to maximize the effect of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost and Peter's message.

It was important that there was more than just a large crowd present; God planned the outpouring so that devout Jews from all over the world would be present, and these Jews would return to their homes and tell others what they had received in Jerusalem, and what Peter preached.

*6 Now when this was noised abroad,
the multitude came together, and were
confounded, because that every man
heard them speak in his own language.*

*7 And they were all amazed and
marvelled, saying one to another,
Behold, are not all these which speak
Galilaeans?*

*8 And how hear we every man in our
own tongue, wherein we were born?*

*9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites,
and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and
in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus,
and Asia,*

*10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt,
and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene,
and strangers of Rome, Jews and
proselytes,*

*11 Cretes and Arabians, we do hear
them speak in our tongues the wonderful
works of God.*

It is sometimes taught that the purpose of the

tongues on the day of Pentecost was to preach to the multitudes; however, the problem with this is that Greek was the universal language of the day and most likely everyone present understood it, making any other language unnecessary. Furthermore, the scriptures tell us that Peter lifted up his *own* voice to speak to the people (verse 14), removing any possibility of the tongues being used to preach. Even if the disciples did use tongues to preach to the multitudes, such an explanation fails to explain the reason for tongues in Acts 10 or Acts 19, since in each case there was no one to preach to!

*12 And they were all amazed, and were
in doubt, saying one to another, What
meaneth this?*

*13 Others mocking said, These men are
full of new wine.*

Some thought the 120 were drunk, further proof that they were not preaching to the multitudes in tongues. If they were simply preaching, no one would have accused them of being drunk.

*14 But Peter, standing up with the
eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto
them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that
dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto
you, and hearken to my words:*

*15 For these are not drunken, as ye
suppose, seeing it is but the third hour
of the day.*

*16 But this is that which was spoken by
the prophet Joel;*

Peter identified what they received and did on that day as "that" spoken of by the prophet Joel. One preacher said, "if *this* is not *that*, then please tell me what is *this* and where is *that*." This statement by Peter is more proof that the Holy Ghost had not yet been poured out on *all* flesh, since he claimed that the Day of Pentecost, and not earlier, was the fulfilment of Joel's prophecy.

*17 And it shall come to pass in the last
days, saith God, I will pour out of my
Spirit upon all flesh:...*

Some teach that the experience that the disciples received on the day of Pentecost is not for everyone. The Bible, however, said God would pour out his Spirit on all flesh.

*...and your sons and your daughters
shall prophesy, and your young men*

shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:

18 And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:

Acts 2:36 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 2:37 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?

KEY POINT: The answer of Peter to these people here is critical. These people would all return to their homelands, their friends, and their families with nothing but what he said at this moment, and what they received today. There was no Matthew 28:19; Matthew had not yet been written. There was no John 3:3 or John 3:5 talking about being born again. These people had never heard of Nicodemus' conversation with Jesus in John 3. There was no John 3:16, no conversion of the Philippian jailor (which would not come until after Paul's conversion, years later), and no "Roman Road" of salvation; the book of Romans was 30 years in the future. There was no book of Galatians; it was decades away. Whatever Peter preached here would become the foundation of the church for the next thirty years, until the books of the Bible began to be written. It would be the only plan of salvation for that thirty year period!

Peter did not say, "accept Christ as your personal savior," as most churches teach today, so this phrase (or some variation of it) was not going to be the foundational doctrine of the church.

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.

Some teach that the Holy Ghost is only for a select few, or only those on the day of Pentecost, but notice again the words of Peter:

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.

42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

What was the Apostles' doctrine? Remember: there was no Matthew 28:19, no John 3:16, no Romans. Therefore the Apostle's doctrine is Acts 2:38. This is the message that became the foundation of the church, and remains so today.

Part II:
Acceptance or Obedience?

Is the phrase, “Accept Christ as your personal Savior” or some variation of it found in the Bible?

One of the most commonly used phrases in the Evangelical Christian world today is “accept Christ as your personal savior” or some variation of this phrase. Unfortunately, the widespread use of this phrase has misled many sincere people into thinking that it is actually found in the Bible. The truth is that these words, and nothing like them, is found in scripture. They have been passed on from person to person down through the years, with very few stopping to carefully study God’s Word to find what it really says about salvation. Countless sinners have followed this formula for salvation, only to find themselves still feeling empty and dirty on the inside.

What about John 3:16?

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)

The major problem with using John 3:16 exclusively as a salvation scripture is that John 3:16, along with the rest of the New Testament, did not exist until some twenty to seventy years after the Day of Pentecost, the birthday of the Church (see Part I: The Significance of Acts 2:38). If John 3:16 or any verse other than Peter’s message on the Day of Pentecost was the true plan of salvation, then the Church was without a true plan of salvation for at least the first twenty years of its existence!

Another problem with basing salvation solely on John 3:16, without considering the Bible as a whole, is that it is quite possible for a Hindu, Muslim, or Buddhist to believe in Jesus Christ. It is quite possible, for example, for such a person to believe that Jesus Christ was a good man or even a good prophet (most do). This verse, taken by itself, does not require repentance, a belief in the crucifixion, resurrection, or ascension of Jesus Christ. Therefore, John 3:16 is not intended to be a “plan of salvation in a nutshell” verse, but rather is telling us that a person who truly believes in Jesus Christ does not have to perish.

What does the Bible really say about acceptance?

In fact, the Bible has a **lot** to say about acceptance. However, what the Bible tells us is **what we must do in order to be accepted by God**. It tells us nothing about accepting Him. The key is obedience to His Word. When we do what He has told us to do, then we will be accepted by Him, and this is all that matters. Only when He accepts us are we truly saved, and this only occurs through

obedience. Let’s examine what the Bible says about acceptance:

If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door...(Genesis 4:7)

The first occurrence of the word “accepted” is found in the preceding verse. The verse is self-explanatory, in that it is clear that we will be accepted by God if we do well (obey Him).

And he said unto him, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken. (Genesis 19:21)

In this verse, God accepts the prayer of Lot. Again, no mention is made of Lot “accepting” God.

And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead...that they may be accepted before the LORD. (Exodus 28:38)

God’s laws for Israel were to be followed specifically to ensure that the children of Israel would be accepted by God. No mention is made of them “accepting” Him.

And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted...(Leviticus 1:4)

Burnt offerings made **according to God’s instructions** were guaranteed acceptance by God.

And if any of the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings be eaten at all on the third day, it shall not be accepted...(Leviticus 7:18)

And if it be eaten at all on the third day, it is abominable; it shall not be accepted. (Leviticus 19:7)

20 But whatsoever hath a blemish, that shall ye not offer: for it shall not be acceptable for you.

21 And whosoever offereth a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the LORD to accomplish his vow, or a freewill offering in beeves or sheep, it shall be perfect to be accepted...(Leviticus 20:20-21)

23 *Either a bullock or a lamb that hath any thing superfluous or lacking in his parts, that mayest thou offer for a freewill offering; but **for a vow it shall not be accepted.*** (Leviticus 20:23)

25 *...and blemishes be in them: **they shall not be accepted for you.*** (Leviticus 20:25)

27 *...and from the eighth day and thenceforth **it shall be accepted** for an offering made by fire unto the LORD.* (Leviticus 22:27)

*And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, **to be accepted for you...*** (Leviticus 23:11)

*...**If the LORD have stirred thee up against me, let him accept an offering...*** (1 Samuel 26:19)

Throughout the Bible, the theme of acceptance by God is overwhelming in its recurrence. Always, it is based upon obedience to His commands.

*Bless, LORD, his substance, and **accept the work of his hands...*** (Deuteronomy 33:11)

*...And Araunah said unto the king, **The LORD thy God accept thee.*** (2 Samuel 24:23)

*...**the LORD also accepted Job*** (Job 42:9).

Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD... (Psalms 19:14)

*...**accept thy burnt sacrifice; Selah.*** (Psalms 20:3)

Accept, I beseech thee, the freewill offerings of my mouth, O LORD... (Psalms 119:108)

*To do justice and judgment is more **acceptable to the LORD** than sacrifice.* (Proverbs 21:3)

*...**for God now accepteth thy works.*** (Ecclesiastes 9:7)

*...**their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar...*** (Isaiah 56:7)

*...**they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar...*** (Isaiah 60:7)

*...**your burnt offerings are not acceptable...*** (Jeremiah 6:20)

*...**therefore the LORD doth not accept them; he will now remember their iniquity, and visit their sins.*** (Jeremiah 14:10)

*When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and an oblation, **I will not accept them...*** (Jeremiah 14:12)

40 *...there shall all the house of Israel, all of them in the land, serve me: **there will I accept them...***

41 ***I will accept you with your sweet savour...*** (Ezekiel 20:40-41)

*...the priests shall make your burnt offerings upon the altar, and your peace offerings; and **I will accept you, saith the Lord GOD.*** (Ezekiel 43:27)

*They sacrifice flesh for the sacrifices of mine offerings, and eat it; **but the LORD accepteth them not;** now will he remember their iniquity, and visit their sins...* (Hosea 8:13)

*Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, **I will not accept them...*** (Amos 5:22)

*...I have no pleasure in you, saith the LORD of hosts, **neither will I accept an offering at your hand.*** (Malachi 1:10)

*...ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: **should I accept this of your hand? saith the LORD.*** (Malachi 1:13)

Some will argue that the dozens of verses relating to acceptance by God are found in the Old Testament, and thus do not apply to us today. Since we are under the

dispensation of grace, the argument goes, our works or obedience have nothing to do with our salvation. Is this true? What does the New Testament have to say on the subject of acceptance? Certainly not that we are to simply “accept Christ,” for this is found nowhere in the New Testament, either. Instead, let’s look at actual verses from the New Testament:

*But in every nation **he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.** (Acts 10:35)*

So we are told by Peter that fearing the Lord and working righteousness are two requirements for acceptance in His eyes. Simply accepting Him as your personal savior is not enough.

*1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, **holy, acceptable unto God,** which is your reasonable service.*

2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. (Romans 12:1-2)

Now we find that in order for our bodies to be acceptable unto God, they must be **a)** a living sacrifice, and **b)** holy.

17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

*18 **For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God,** and approved of men. (Romans 14:18)*

Paul is clear that if we serve Christ in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, we are acceptable to God. Thus we **cannot** be acceptable to God without the Holy Ghost. This is further stated in the following verse:

...that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost. (Romans 15:16)

The offering of the Gentiles (non-Jews) is made acceptable because it is sanctified by the Holy Ghost. How can one possibly be accepted of God without the Holy Ghost, since it is the Holy Ghost that sanctifies our offering?

***Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.* (2 Corinthians 5:9)**

Again, we labor to be accepted by God.

Consider what the following verses have to say about being acceptable to God:

Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. (Ephesians 5:10)

But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God. (Philippians 4:18)

For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; (1 Timothy 2:3)

But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to show piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God. (1 Timothy 5:4)

Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: (Hebrews 12:28)

Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 2:5)

For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. (1 Peter 2:20)

In each of the seven preceding verses, we are told what is acceptable to God. None mention anything having to do with accepting Christ as savior. In fact, we do not encounter a single verse of scripture even remotely suggesting our “acceptance” of Christ other than II Corinthians 11:4:

For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have

not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him. (2 Corinthians 11:4)

This verse, which speaks of a gospel accepted by the Corinthians, is the only verse which suggests that we accept Christ at all. It is important to note, however, that it is not *Christ* that is accepted here, but rather the *gospel*. In other words, it is not simply an act of accepting Christ into our hearts, as some suggest, but embracing *and obeying* of the gospel, or good news, of Jesus Christ. This gospel is not only to be believed and accepted, however, but to be obeyed as well.

Ok, I see that I cannot simply accept Christ as my personal savior and be saved. But what else must I do? Exactly what do I have to obey?

You must obey (not just believe) the gospel. The Bible is explicitly clear on this:

But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? (Romans 10:16)

In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: (2 Thessalonians 1:8)

For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? (1 Peter 4:17)

I don't understand. I see that I must obey the Gospel, yet I don't know how. Isn't the Gospel the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ? How do I obey His death, burial, and resurrection?

It is simple. You must die, be buried, and rise again. When you crucify yourself in repentance, are buried in baptism, and resurrected by the Holy Ghost, you have obeyed the Gospel. Let's look at each of these steps in succession:

First, you must repent. Repentance is confessing past sins, renouncing those sins, and turning to God. It is a change of mind, and a change of attitude. You must purpose in your heart that you will serve God.

But isn't repentance part of believing, or accepting Christ?

For some, it may be. For others, it is not. For

example, the drunk or drug addict on skid row may sincerely *believe* in God, and may *believe* the gospel. However, he is still bound by sin. He has believed, but he has not obeyed, and there is a distinct difference between the two. Because he has not repented of his sins, he cannot be delivered from them. God demands repentance, and will not set us free through any other means.

Notice that Mark 1:15 tells us to repent *and believe*:

And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel. (Mark 1:15)

Repentance is a change of attitude, a change of lifestyle. It encompasses the "obeying" portion of the plan of salvation. Believing, on the other hand, simply means to acknowledge the correctness of something.

It is quite common in many churches to teach that the Holy Ghost comes into a person's heart immediately when that person believes the gospel or "accepts Christ" in to his heart. Does the Bible teach this? Consider Acts 5:32:

And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him. (Acts 5:32)

So Acts 5:32 proves that the Holy Ghost comes not by simple acceptance, but by obedience.

Another example of this principle is found in the eighth chapter of Acts. In this chapter, we find that the people of Samaria heard Christ preached (verse 5), gave heed to preaching (verse 6), heard and saw miracles (verse 6), had joy (verse 8), believed the message (verse 12), and were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus (verse 16). Yet in spite of all this, they *did not have the Holy Ghost* (verses 15 and 16). Clearly, none of these things in and of itself is proof of the Holy Ghost.

What else does the New Testament have to say about obedience?

And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith. (Acts 6:7)

Note that the priests did not merely *believe* the faith; they were *obedient* to it.

By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name:

(Romans 1:5)

5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;

6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds:

7 To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:

*8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,
(Romans 2:5-8)*

fervently: (1 Peter 1:22)

Your soul is purified by *obeying* the truth, not just believing the truth.

In other words, those who do not obey the truth (verse 8) store up wrath and indignation from God to themselves on the day of wrath and revelation.

But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. (Romans 6:17)

*O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?
(Galatians 3:1)*

Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? (Galatians 5:7)

Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. (Philippians 2:12)

And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; (Hebrews 5:9)

Please note: Jesus is not the author of eternal salvation to all them that believe in Him, but to all them that *obey* Him. See Acts 5:32, which tells us that the Holy Ghost is given to them that *obey* Him.

Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart

Part III:
The Necessity of the Holy Ghost

Is the Holy Ghost for every believer, or is it just an added blessing?

We will begin this study by examining every relevant verse in the New Testament having anything to do with the Holy Ghost and salvation.

1. When John the Baptist prophesied of the coming baptism of the Holy Ghost, he did not say it was for some Christians only. He included everyone in his prophecy.

Our search takes us first to the book of Matthew. Let's take a look at the words of John the Baptist in Matthew 3:11:

I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:

It would seem to make sense that if the Holy Ghost was intended for only a select few, but not all saved people, then John would not have made such a blanket statement. He would have said, "he shall baptize some of you with the Holy Ghost...". However, John did not say this. He did not waver or stutter. He included all of his audience in his prophecy.

2. When Jesus warned his disciples of the persecution to come, He also told them that the Holy Ghost would speak through them. He did not make any exceptions for those who would be "saved" but would not have the Holy Ghost. He assumed that every Christian would have the Holy Ghost.

In Matthew 10:20, Jesus is speaking to his disciples. A pattern begins here that is carried throughout the New Testament: *not once does any writer of any book ever speak to two different groups of Christians: those who have the Holy Ghost and those who do not. Every writer of every book assumes every Christian has the Holy Ghost.*

In Matthew 10:20 and Mark 13:11, Jesus tells his disciples not to worry about what they will say when they are brought before governors and kings, because the Spirit will speak through them:

For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. (Matthew 10:20)

But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what

ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost. (Mark 13:11)

Once again, Jesus treats the subject as automatic; He assumes every disciple will have the Holy Spirit.

Some may argue that there is a difference between the Holy Spirit and the Spirit of Christ or the Spirit of the Father. Does the Bible say so? Look at Ephesians 4:4:

*There is one body, and **one** Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; (Ephesians 4:4)*

Since there is only one Spirit, that Spirit must be the Holy Spirit. Matthew 10:20 and Mark 13:11 use the terms "Spirit of your Father" and "Holy Ghost" interchangeably, and the terms "Spirit of Christ" and "Spirit of God" are used interchangeably elsewhere in scripture, proving that they are indeed synonymous:

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. (Romans 8:9)

Anywhere in the Bible where the Spirit is mentioned, whether it is the Spirit of Christ, God, or the Father, it is always the Holy Spirit. There is only one Spirit.

3. The Holy Ghost is given to those who sincerely ask for it:

If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? (Luke 11:13)

4. Without the Holy Spirit, you cannot enter the kingdom of God.

Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. (John 3:5)

Some may argue that there is a difference between "receiving" the Holy Spirit, or being "born again," and being "baptized" in or with the Spirit. However, *not once does the Bible provide any record of any such distinction.*

Not once do we read of someone who “receives” the Spirit only to later be “filled” or “baptized” with the Spirit. When the Bible speaks of being “baptized” in or with the Spirit, it means exactly the same thing as being born again.

5. The Holy Ghost is our comforter and teacher. It is inconceivable that someone could be a victorious Christian without this teacher, because it teaches us all truth. Without it, you cannot know truth.

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. (John 14:26)

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. (John 16:13)

It is not only the Spirit that teaches us truth, but it is the Spirit that empowers us to obey the truth. Without it, you are a slave to sin.

Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: (1 Peter 1:22)

6. Jesus promised the baptism of the Holy Ghost to all of His disciples, not a select few.

For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. (Acts 1:5)

7. Jesus identified the Holy Ghost as the source of spiritual power. Without it, you have no power.

But 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. (Acts 1:8)

8. On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Ghost was poured out to all those in the upper room. It was not selective; everyone received it. It is Biblical to expect everyone to receive it today.

And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other

tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts 2:4)

9. The prophet Joel prophesied that the Spirit of the Lord (the Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit) would be poured out on all flesh. It would not be a selective outpouring, but would be available to everyone.

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: (Acts 2:17)

10. When Peter preached to the multitudes on the day of Pentecost, he said the Holy Ghost was for anyone who would repent and be baptized in Jesus name. Thus, we can only conclude that those who have not received it have not obeyed his command:

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. (Acts 2:38)

This brings us to one major reason that many today are professing Christians yet have never received the Holy Ghost: they have simply not obeyed God’s Word. As simple as it sounds, it is true: many believers have never truly repented, and most believers in the Christian community today have never been baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. True, most have been baptized in the titles Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, but most have not been baptized in the name of Jesus. It is this simple act of neglect or disobedience that has caused many thousands to miss the joy of the Holy Ghost. If a person truly repents and is baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, he or she is promised the Holy Ghost.

11. The Holy Ghost is promised to all who obey God. It is inconceivable that a person could be a victorious Christian without obeying God:

And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him. (Acts 5:32)

Perhaps more than any other, this verse proves the necessity of the Holy Ghost. Only those who obey God will receive it.

12. When Peter preached to Cornelius’ household in Acts 10, everyone who heard the Word received

the Holy Ghost. It was not poured out selectively, once again proving it is for everyone.

While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. (Acts 10:44)

13. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. It is therefore impossible to have the love of God without the Holy Ghost.

And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. (Romans 5:5)

Notice that in the preceding verse, Paul once again assumes that all of his audience has the Holy Ghost.

14. It is the Holy Ghost that takes away the condemnation of sin and makes us free from the law of sin and death.

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. (Romans 8:1-2)

15. Romans 8:9 clearly tells us that we do not belong to God if we do not have His Spirit.

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. (Romans 8:9)

Of course, some will argue that the Spirit of Christ and the Holy Spirit are two different Spirits, but we have already proven from Ephesians 4:4 that there is not but one Spirit, and that the terms “Spirit of Christ,” “Spirit of the Father,” “Spirit of God,” and “Holy Spirit” are used interchangeably throughout the Bible (compare Matthew 10:20 with Mark 13:11).

All too often it is human nature to make the Bible more complicated than it need be. There are not several different mysterious “Spirits,” nor is there a difference in being “filled” with the Spirit and “baptized” with the Spirit.

16. It is the Holy Spirit that will resurrect us from the dead. Without it, you will not be part of the resurrection of the just.

But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from

the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. (Romans 8:11)

17. Only those who are led by the Spirit are sons of God.

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. (Romans 8:14)

18. The Spirit is our witness that we are children of God.

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: (Romans 8:16)

19. Since the kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, you cannot be part of the kingdom of God without the Holy Ghost.

For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. (Romans 14:17)

20. Our joy, peace, and hope comes from the Holy Ghost. Without it, we have no joy, peace, or hope.

Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. (Romans 15:13)

21. When we submit ourselves to God as a living sacrifice, our offering is sanctified (made pure) by the Holy Ghost.

That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost. (Romans 15:16)

22. It is impossible to know the things of God without the Holy Spirit. Without it, you are wandering in darkness.

11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. 13 Which things also we speak, not in the

words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. (1 Corinthians 2:11-13)

Notice once again that Paul assumes everyone in his audience has the Holy Ghost.

Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. (2 Corinthians 1:22)

We having the same spirit of faith... (2 Corinthians 4:13)

...God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. (2 Corinthians 5:5)

For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received...(2 Corinthians 11:4)

For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. (Galatians 5:5)

...walked we not in the same spirit? walked we not in the same steps? (2 Corinthians 12:18)

And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost: (1 Thessalonians 1:6)

He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit. (1 Thessalonians 4:8)

That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us. (2 Timothy 1:14)

23. It is the Holy Ghost that makes us the temple (dwelling place) of God.

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? (1 Corinthians 3:16)

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? (1 Corinthians 6:19)

We must continue to emphasize that Paul *never* writes to his audience as though some have the Holy Ghost and some do not. He *always* assumes everyone has the Spirit of

God dwelling within them.

But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, (Jude 1:20)

24. As Christians, we are washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit.

And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:11)

25. No man can truly profess that Jesus is Lord of his life if he does not have the Holy Ghost, so if you do not have the Holy Ghost, Jesus is not completely Lord of your life.

Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. (1 Corinthians 12:3)

26. We are baptized into the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit.

For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:13)

27. The Holy Spirit gives life, so anyone who does not have the Holy Spirit is spiritually dead.

Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. (2 Corinthians 3:6)

For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. (Galatians 6:8)

We are “quickened” (made alive) by the Spirit.

For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit. (1 Peter 3:18)

28. The Holy Spirit gives us liberty. Without the Holy Spirit, you are still bound in sin.

Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. (2 Corinthians 3:17)

29. We are changed into the image of God by the Holy Spirit. Without it, you can never hope to attain God's image.

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. (2 Corinthians 3:18)

30. Paul asks the Galatian church rhetorically how they received the Holy Ghost in chapter three verse two, and answers "by the hearing of faith," confirming that true faith accompanied by repentance will always result in the Holy Ghost:

This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? (Galatians 3:2)

31. We begin our walk with God in the Spirit (receiving the Holy Ghost).

Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? (Galatians 3:3)

32. Those who are led by the Spirit are no longer under the Law. Thus it requires the Spirit to free us from the law of sin and death.

But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. (Galatians 5:18)

33. It is the Holy Spirit that seals us, or identifies us as a child of God.

In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, (Ephesians 1:13)

And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. (Ephesians 4:30)

34. It is only through the death of Jesus Christ and by

the Holy Spirit that we have access to God.

For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. (Ephesians 2:18)

35. It is only by the Holy Spirit that we become a habitation (dwelling place) of God.

In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. (Ephesians 2:22)

36. Paul understood that his salvation and sanctification (holiness) come through the prayers of the saints and the Holy Spirit.

For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, (Philippians 1:19)

In other words, Paul's salvation was through the supply of the Spirit. Since there is only one Spirit (Ephesians 4:4), he must be referring to the Holy Spirit.

...God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: (2 Thessalonians 2:13)

Salvation comes through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; (Titus 3:5)

We are saved by the washing of regeneration (baptism - washing) and renewing the Holy Ghost. It is impossible to renew something you have never had.

14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. 15 Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, (Hebrews 10:15)

The Holy Ghost is a witness that we are sanctified (made holy), once again proving that it is impossible to be sanctified without it. This holiness (sanctification) is not our holiness or good works, but His presence in us. It is only through God's Spirit dwelling in us that we can ever be holy in His sight.

Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus

*Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.
(1 Peter 1:2)*

*And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth
in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he
abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.
(1 John 3:24)*

*Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in
us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. (1
John 4:13)*