

THE BIG DIFFERENCE

The Resurrection of Jesus
Changes Everything in a Really Big Way

The Big Gift

In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." **ACTS 1:1-5**

"When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off — for all whom the Lord our God will call."

ACTS 2:37-39

"As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning. Then I remembered what the Lord had said: 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' So if God gave them the same gift as he gave us, who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could oppose God?" When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, "So then, God has granted even the Gentiles repentance unto life." " **ACTS 11:15-18**

Wait "for the gift" Jesus told them (Acts 1:4). The 'big difference' the resurrection makes for all those knowing and following the risen Jesus is not just that the path becomes more spiritual than physical, but that our life is now Spirit-assisted and Spirit-directed. Following Christ is not something that we can do alone, not something we were ever meant to pull off by ourselves. We need the gift of the Spirit, sent by the Father, to be present and powerful in our lives as we follow the Son. This means being actively led with the presence, peace and prompting of the Spirit helping us to find our way. There is a real learning curve involved in embracing this 'yoked life', not just doing our best, but relying on and trusting in the presence and help of God's Spirit day by day. Three foundational truths will help get us started and keep us moving forward:

1. the gift is initiated by need
2. the gift is activated by faith
3. the gift is evidenced by love

NEXT WEEKEND: The Big Difference - "The Big Task"