

PLAIN SPEECH

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“Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech” (2 Cor. 3:12)

By Scott Parker

PERSONAL INDWELLERS, HONESTY, AND A PASSAGE IN ACTS

Two Wednesdays ago, one of the favorite passages of those who advocate the erroneous view of a personal, non-miraculous, indwelling of the Holy Spirit at the point baptism, was debunked in Bible class. The passage is **Acts 5:32**. The purpose of this article is to put something into your hands to help you if you ever have to deal with a “personal indweller.” All passages, unless otherwise noted, come from **Acts**.

- ✓ The context for **5:32** begins in **5:12**. That verse says miracles were being wrought by the apostles.
- ✓ Next, some obeyed the gospel after hearing apostolic preaching corroborated by miracles (**5:13-16**).
- ✓ The Jewish powerbrokers, filled with indignation, tossed the apostles in prison (**5:17-18**).
- ✓ The apostles benefited from a miraculous prison-break and went back to preaching (**5:20-21a, 25**).
- ✓ The high priest and his cronies had the apostles rounded up and brought before them (**5:21b-28**).
- ✓ Next, Peter, an apostle, preaches a sermon (**5:29-32**).

Now just where is the contextual proof that anyone other than apostles are under consideration in **5:32**? It is not there. Thus, honesty and context both demand that the “we” of **vs. 32** equates to apostles and to no one else. Conveniently, those who preach the indwelling read “all believers for all time” into the text.

Next, what, contextually, are “these things” noted in **vs. 32**? The answer is the death, resurrection, and exaltation of Christ (**vs. 30-31**). Certainly the apostles were witnesses of such (**1 Cor. 15:4, 7; Acts 1:9-11**), but how was the Holy Ghost a witness? Honesty and context demand that the Holy Ghost was a witness by allowing those who had obeyed God; i.e. the apostles, to perform miracles so as to verify their message (**5:12, 16; 4:16; Mark 16:15-20; John 15:26-27**).

It is just that simple, beloved. There is nothing difficult about this. Honesty and context, when applied and adhered to, demand no other conclusion. Personal indwellers will have to find another passage to twist (**2 Peter 3:16**), for **Acts 5:32** certainly, in no way whatsoever, teaches their doctrine.

Sadly, those who teach a literal, non-miraculous, indwelling at the point of baptism, either cannot, or will not, see how easy the text is. For example: one time, while still institutional, I was pointing out to a “famous” preacher in the Denver area named Roger Shepherd the fact that today the Holy Ghost only works through the Word to convict men of sin and/or keep man on the right path (**Ephesians 6:17**). Roger thought (still thinks) he knew it all. He quickly quoted **Acts 5:32** and said, “*Scott, the text says what it says.*” I replied, “*A proof-text without the context is a pretext...*” but that’s another story. The point is this: indwellers will not easily change their view.

To help them see the truth, try the following.

- ✓ Ask the indweller who appeals to **Acts 5:32** if he or she is a miracle working apostle, for such is what the context of the passage demands. Press indwellers on this.
- ✓ Ask the indweller who appeals to **Acts 5:32** how the Holy Ghost today witnesses to the veracity of Christ’s humiliation, resurrection, ascension and exaltation apart from the Word of God? What will he say? Feelings?
- ✓ Ask the indweller who appeals to **Acts 5:32** what happens to the Holy Ghost, who personally lives inside of them, when sin is committed? Does Deity live somewhere He hates (**Psalms 5:4-5**)? Does he vacate the premises and then return upon repentance? Ask him to explain his “revolving door” position.
- ✓ Ask the indweller who appeals to **Acts 5:32** to stand before the President, Congress and the Supreme Court and exclaim: “*I know for a fact that Jesus died, rose again and is exalted at the right hand of the Father. I know this because the Holy Ghost lives inside of me, and has since I was baptized. I know it sounds strange, and I cannot prove such, but He’s there; I just know He is.*” Such is a modern application of their sugar-stick passage. Listen, if an indweller will do so I will buy his plane ticket to Washington.