

Gifts Of The Holy Spirit

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The writer of Hebrews asked, “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?” (Heb. 2:3-4). Paul wrote the Corinthians, “Now concerning *spiritual gifts*, brethren, I would not have you ignorant” (1 Cor. 12:1). To not be ignorant concerning spiritual gifts is to know what the Bible teaches about them. Thus, we study.

1) Not To Be Confused With. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are not to be confused with the “gifts” or functionalities given by the Lord: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers (Eph. 4:7-12). What then are the gifts of the Holy Spirit?

2) Identifying The Gifts. The gifts are identified in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10. They were nine in number: wisdom, knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, divers kinds of tongues, and the

interpretation of tongues. These were supernatural abilities. For example: The gift of tongues was the supernatural ability to speak a language other than one’s native tongue, which one had not studied or been taught.

3) How The Gifts Were Given. From reading Acts 8:14-19 one will learn “...that through laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Ghost was given...” (v. 18). Acts 19 tells of the apostle Paul’s work at Ephesus. Verse 6 reports, “And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.”

4) The Gifts Were Non-Transferable. If an apostle had laid hands on you, the gifts of the Holy Spirit could not be given through laying on of your hands. This is seen from the work of Philip in Samaria as recorded in Acts 8. The apostles had laid hands on Philip in Acts 6:5-6. Yet, the apostles Peter and John were sent from Jerusalem to Samaria (Acts 8:1, 14-16). “Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost” (Acts 8:17). Thus, the gifts of the Holy Spirit required the

presence of an apostle! The fact that Philip was there, but the apostles had to be sent, shows the gifts were non-transferable! What happened to the gifts, then, when the apostles and all those upon whom they had laid hands were deceased? They ceased!

5) The Duration Of The Gifts. Spiritual gifts were temporary. 1 Corinthians 13 tells of their duration. Verse 8 says, “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.” The three gifts mentioned (prophecies, tongues, and knowledge) are representative of all nine spiritual gifts. If the gifts continue today, then the words “fail,” “cease” and “vanish away” have no meaning! Verses 9-10 explain when the gifts would come to an end — “... when that which is perfect is come...” *That which is perfect is not Christ — for Christ is a He; not a that — but is of the same nature as that which is in part — part knowledge and part prophecy (v. 9).* When divine revelation was complete, then these gifts would go by the wayside. James spoke of “...the

perfect law of liberty...” (Jas. 1:25). The Psalmist said, “The law of the Lord is perfect...” (Ps. 19:7). Paul used two illustrations to serve as examples of spiritual gifts being put away: a man putting away childish things (v. 11) and seeing face to face instead of through a glass darkly (v. 12). By the way, this is the same illustration he used in teaching the old testament was temporary and done away in Christ (2 Cor. 3:18). Spiritual gifts are like a tug. When the aircraft is pushed away from the airport gate, the tug is removed and the aircraft moves on its own.

6) The Purpose Of The Gifts. The gifts of the Holy Spirit existed in the first century, during the infancy of the church in the absence of complete divine revelation, for a twofold purpose:

Confirmation. Spiritual gifts served to confirm the word. Mark 16:20 records, “And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.” The Hebrews writer affirmed, “...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” (Heb. 2:3-4). Once a thing has been confirmed, it is once for all time confirmed — it does not need to be reconfirmed (Gal. 3:15, 17). Since the word of the Lord has already been confirmed, there is no need for gifts or signs today to confirm it!

Edification. Since they did not have the Bible as we do, but rather “...that which is in part...” (1 Cor. 13:9), the church was edified by “...he that prophesieth...” and through men speaking intelligible languages they could understand or interpreting a language that was unknown to the hearer (1 Cor. 14).

Once the purpose of the gifts had been served, God did away with them!

7) The Gifts Regulated. 1 Corinthians 14 regulated the use of spiritual gifts. The emphasis many today place on so-called ‘tongue speaking,’ one would think “divers kinds of tongues” was the greater gift. Paul said, “...greater is he that prophesieth

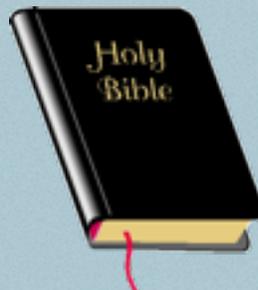
than he that speaketh with tongues...” (v. 5). Two principles are established concerning tongue speaking: it was to be understood (vv. 1-22) and to be orderly (vv. 23-40). The chapter also shows that the possessor of the gift had control of the gift; the gift did not control him. We are told today, it is spontaneous, spur-of-the-moment, involuntary, over which one has no control. If so, why the teaching of 1 Corinthians 14? Verse 32 says, “And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.” Paul said, “...tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not...” (v. 22). They have that backwards! In some places, all ‘speak in tongues’ so-called. Notice what verse 23 says! At the most, it was by three and they were to take turns (v. 27). If no interpreter, keep silent! (v. 28). “If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace” (v. 30). “Let your women keep silence...” (v. 34). “Let all things be done decently and in order (v. 40). Wonder why those claiming spiritual gifts today do not observe the rules regulating their use in the first-century!

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