

## Spiritual Gifts

### I. Introduction:

- A. The popular intellectual climate of our age is sometimes called “postmodernist.”
  - 1. The age of “modernism” subjected all beliefs to the standard of human reason.
  - 2. In reaction to this, “postmodernism” appeals to feelings and emotion.
- B. Thus, in the religious world, “charismatic” claims are all the rage.
- C. Their attempt to justify their practices biblically is the claim that the spiritual gifts of the first century are for all believers until the end of time.
- D. Thus, they are simply a watered down, more respectable version of Pentecostalism.
- E. Does biblical teaching on spiritual gifts support modern charismatic claims?

### I. What are the issues?

#### A. NOT

- 1. honesty of charismatics
- 2. reality of some experience - cf. Jacob’s belief Joseph was dead in Genesis 37.
  - a. There was a real experience involved, but Jacob misinterpreted it.
  - b. Jacob sincerely, deeply believed Joseph was dead, but he was sincerely mistaken.
- 3. existence of miraculous, spiritual gifts in the first century church
- 4. power of God
- 5. unchangeableness of God
- 6. the fact the Holy Spirit is alive and active

#### B. IS

- 1. Are miraculous, spiritual gifts promised to Christians today?
- 2. Do modern charismatics measure up to the New Testament standard?

### II. What were the spiritual gifts?

#### A. definitions

- 1. “spiritual”: “emanating from the Divine Spirit, or exhibiting its effects and so its character.... produced by the sole power of God himself without natural instrumentality, supernatural” (Thayer. 532) - cf. 1 Corinthians 12:1,7
  - a. directly from God
  - b. distinct from the written Word
  - c. miraculous
- 2. gifts”: *charisma: a gift of grace; a favor which one receives without any merit of his own.... extraordinary powers, distinguishing certain Christians and enabling them to serve the church of Christ, the reception of which is due to the power of divine grace operating in their souls by the Holy Spirit* (Ibid. 667) - cf. 1 Corinthians 12:4

B. Those so led by the Spirit would speak truth and only truth. - 1 Corinthians 12:2-3; 14:37

C. All the gifts emanated from one Godhead. - 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 (Thus, His Word, not feelings, emotions, or experiences, must be the standard by which supposed gifts are measured. - 1 John 4:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:21; 2 Corinthians 5:7; Romans 10:17)

- D. There were many manifestations of one Spirit. - 1 Corinthians 12:7-11
1. “word of wisdom”: miraculously imparted understanding of divine will
  2. “word of knowledge”: miraculously imparted knowledge of will
  3. “faith”: miracle working faith, not saving faith - cf. Matthew 17:19-20
  4. “gifts of healings”: miraculous ability to heal diseases and infirmities - Mark 16:17-18; Acts 3:1-10
  5. “working of miracles”: (*dunamis*: divine power) - cf. Mark 16:17-18; Acts 9:36-42; 20:7-12
  6. “prophecy”: speaking for God - cf. Exodus 4:15-16; 7:1-2
  7. “discerning of spirits”: ability to know another’s mind - Acts 5:1-4
  8. “tongues”
    - a. This was the miraculous ability to speak a language foreign to the speaker. - Acts 2:4-11
      - (1) The word “unknown” is an interpolation (added by the translators). - 1 Corinthians 14:2
      - (2) The “tongues of angels” were still languages and were to be interpreted. - 1 Corinthians 13:1; 14:10,28
    - b. Tongues was the least important of the nine spiritual gifts. - 1 Corinthians 12:7-11,28,31
    - c. Why, then, do our “charismatic” friends so ardently seek this gift?
      - (1) One can more easily deceive himself with this. - 1 Corinthians 12:2
      - (2) It is showy. - 1 Corinthians 14:20
  9. “interpretation of tongues” - the miraculous ability to translate a language one could not know by natural means
- III. Upon what basis shall we conduct our inquiry?
- A. The gospel appeals to man’s understanding.
    1. One must understand to come to Christ. - John 6:44-45
    2. The new birth is the result of understanding. - 1 Peter 1:22-25
  - B. Miracles appealed to the understanding. - John 20:30-31; Mark 16:20
  - C. Tongues appealed to the understanding rather than to the emotions.
    1. If the tongue speaker was not understood - 1 Corinthians 14:2,14
      - a. It was unprofitable. - 1 Corinthians 14:6
      - b. It was just so much air. - 1 Corinthians 14:9
      - c. It made the tongue speaker like a barbarian. - 1 Corinthians 14:11
      - d. The hearer could not say, “Amen.” - 1 Corinthians 14:16
      - e. It did not edify. - 1 Corinthians 14:17, cf. verses 12, 26
      - f. Outsiders would think they were insane. - 1 Corinthians 14:23
    2. It was better to speak five understandable words than ten thousand unintelligible ones. - 1 Corinthians 14:19
  - D. Thus our appeal will be to reason from the Scriptures, not to relate emotional experiences or tell about feelings.

IV. Have spiritual gifts fulfilled their purposes?

A. Reveal the Truth

1. Spiritual gifts were to reveal truth. - 1 Corinthians 14:6
2. All truth has been revealed. - John 16:13; Galatians 1:6-9
3. Therefore, spiritual gifts have fulfilled their purpose of revealing truth.

B. Confirm the Word

1. Spiritual gifts were to confirm the Word. - Mark 16:17-20
2. The Word has been confirmed. - Hebrews 2:1-4
3. Therefore, spiritual gifts have fulfilled their purpose of confirming the Word.

C. Edify

1. Spiritual gifts were to edify in the absence of the written Word. - 1 Corinthians 14:12-13,26; cf. 13:9
2. The written Word is now completely sufficient to edify us. - Acts 20:32; 2 Timothy 3:16-17
3. Therefore, spiritual gifts have fulfilled their purpose of edifying.

D. Since spiritual gifts have fulfilled all three reasons for which they were given, we should expect that they have ceased.

V. The New Testament reveals when spiritual gifts were to cease. - 1 Corinthians 13:8-13

|   |                         |   |
|---|-------------------------|---|
| <p><b>Charismatic Position</b><br/>                 “that which is perfect” is Christ</p> <p>1. doesn’t fit the context<br/>                 2. involves an insurmountable difficulty</p> |                         |   |
| First Century   | Present                 | After Christ Returns                                  |
| spiritual gifts   | spiritual gifts         |   |
| faith,<br>hope,<br>love   | faith,<br>hope,<br>love | faith - Hebrews 11:1<br>hope - Romans 8:24-25<br>love |
| <p><b>The Truth</b><br/>                 “that which is perfect” is the completed revelation</p> <p>1. fits the context<br/>                 2. involves no scriptural difficulty</p>     |                         |   |
| First Century   | Present                 | After Christ Returns                                  |
| spiritual gifts   |                         |   |
| faith,<br>hope,<br>love   | faith,<br>hope,<br>love | love  |

- A. “perfect”: “1) brought to its end, finished 2) wanting nothing necessary to completeness” (**SeedMaster** computer Bible program; quoting **TDNT**) - cf. 1 Thessalonians 3:9-10
  - B. If this speaks of Christ and His return, then faith and hope will continue to abide after His return. - 1 Corinthians 13:13
    - 1. But faith will become sight. - Hebrews 11:1
    - 2. Hope will be realized. - Romans 8:24-25
  - C. The context is of complete revelation. - 1 Corinthians 13:9-12
  - D. Thus, when the revelation was completed, the spiritual gifts ceased.
- VI. Spiritual gifts cannot be imparted today.
- A. Spiritual gifts were imparted by and only by the apostles of Christ. - Acts 8:14-19; 19:1-7; Romans 1:11; 1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6
  - B. There are no apostles on the earth today. - Acts 1:21-22,25-26; 1 Corinthians 15:8
  - C. Therefore, no one today can impart spiritual gifts.
- VII. God is not the author of lies.
- A. God is the author of truth and only truth. - John 17:17; Titus 1:2
  - B. All those who claim to have spiritual gifts today could not possibly be of the truth.
    - 1. They teach various and conflicting doctrines. - United Pentecostal, Assembly of God, Catholic, Mormon, etc.
    - 2. Yet they all give the same proof: second hand tales of supposed experiences.
    - 3. Why should we believe one and reject the others?
- VIII. Modern charismatics do not measure up to the first century standard.
- A. Where are those who drink poison and pick up deadly serpents? - Mark 16:17-18 (So, their so-called “full gospel” becomes a three-fifths gospel by their own standard.)
  - B. Why do they not raise the dead? - Acts 9:36-42 (If they will raise one; I will raise two. If they will raise two; I will raise the rest of the cemetery. And I don’t claim to be able to work miracles!)
  - C. They have more than one speaking in tongues simultaneously. - 1 Corinthians 14:27, cf. v. 32
  - D. They speak in tongues without interpreters. - 1 Corinthians 14:27-28
  - E. They have women preachers. - 1 Corinthians 14:34-35; 1 Timothy 2:11-12
  - F. Their assemblies are disorderly. - 1 Corinthians 14:33,40
  - G. They use instrumental music in worship. - 1 Corinthians 14:15; Ephesians 5:18-19
  - H. Their assemblies are more for entertainment than for worship and edification. - 1 Corinthians 14:26
- Conclusion:
- A. We have measured the modern charismatic claims by the New Testament standard and have found them lacking. - 1 John 4:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:21
  - B. Spiritual gifts were the scaffolding for the building of the New Testament. Since the building is finished, i.e., the New Testament has been completely revealed, confirmed and recorded, the scaffolding has come down.