

HOLY SPIRIT: GIFTS (III)

“There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit... (I Corinthians 12:4). The gifts of the Spirit take up all of I Corinthians 12. These gifts are “manifestations of the Spirit” (7). “Manifestations” means “to show in, to exhibit.” These gifts are visible signs of the working of the Holy Spirit through His gifts. It appears this emphasis is given to counteract so-called manifestations of demonic powers that pagans were used to before they were saved (2-3). These “manifestations” seemed to demonstrate the supernatural power of the Gospel working in the lives of believers. In other words, these demonstrations of the Spirit proved the message of salvation in Jesus Christ: A “word of wisdom” (8) is the communication of spiritual wisdom. A “word of knowledge” (8) is the communication of practical truth. “Faith” (9) is an unusual reliance on God. “Gifts of healing” (9). The word is used in the plural. The gift of healing was the ability to cure others of all forms of sickness. It includes restoration of life (Acts 9:40; 20:12). “Miracles” (10) were given to authenticate the Gospel message. The word “miracles” means “power” or “a work of power.” “Prophecy” (10) is the ability to proclaim a revelation from God (New revelations aren’t given since the close of the New Testament). “Discerning of spirits” (10) is the ability to discern true prophecies from false, Satanic prophecies. “Tongues” and “the interpretation of tongues” (10) is the ability to speak and interpret languages unknown by the speaker or the interpreter. These gifts are sovereignly given by the Holy spirit (11). Not all gifts are of the same importance (28). Not all people are to possess the same gifts (that includes tongues) (29). There is nothing wrong with desiring certain gifts, but we are encouraged to the best (greater) gifts (31). There is, however, something better than gifts, and we are to desire it – love (31). The question arises as to whether these gifts are for today. My view is that except for the offices of apostle and prophet (which are foundational – Ephesians 2:20), the other gifts continue. Here are my reasons: 1. Paul exhorted that “you come short in ‘no gift’ eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2. At Pentecost, Peter quoted from the Prophet Joel, indicating that the coming of the Holy Spirit indicated we were in the “last days” (Acts 2:17). However, only part of Joel’s prophecy has been fulfilled (Acts 2:17-18). There will be another pouring forth of the Holy Spirit during the Tribulation which has not yet been fulfilled (Acts 2:19-21), when God begins to call Israel back to their land. Gifts like “tongues (languages) are for a sign to unbelievers; but prophecy is not for unbelievers but for those who believe” (I Corinthians 14:22). Many have turned that around.