



## Each Spiritual Gift Individually Examined

### Temporary Gifts

#### **1. Apostle**

Definition: the gift that provided absolute authority over the churches until the absolute authority of God's Word was provided through a completed canon of Scripture. (Terminated 96 AD)

Greek: *apostolos* was used in classical Greek to refer to a commander of a naval expedition and came to refer to one sent out or dispatched as a delegate, envoy, or messenger. It came to be used to denote a group of believers who had been commissioned with a special function. (See *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* by Walter Bauer, p. 99)

#### Take note:

It seems evident from the Scriptures that the gift of apostleship was limited to the first-century church. Apostles were distinguished from prophets and teachers in 1 Corinthians 12:28. During the apostolic period they had unusual authority and were the channels of divine revelation. Often they had the gift of prophecy as well as that of working miracles. Generally speaking, those who were in the inner circle of the apostles were eyewitnesses of the resurrection of Christ or, like Paul, had seen Christ subsequent to His resurrection. In Protestantism comparatively few claims have been advanced that any persons exist today with the same apostolic gift found in the early church.

#### Technical Usage of "Apostle":

In the technical sense, only the twelve chosen by Christ were apostles. Only twelve men ever held or will ever hold the office of apostle. Summary of Apostolic Requirements:

- Chosen by the Lord Himself (Matt. 10:1, 2; Mark 3:13, 14; Luke 6:13; Acts 9:6, 15; 13:2; 22:10, 14, 15; Rom. 1:1)
- Endued with sign gifts and miraculous powers which were the divine credentials of their office (Matt. 10:1; Acts 5:15, 16; 16:16-18; 28:8, 9)

- Their relation to the kingdom was that of heralds, announcing to Israel only (Matt. 10:5, 6) that the kingdom was at hand (Matt. 4:17) and they manifested kingdom powers (Matt. 10:7, 8)
- Their future relation to the kingdom will be that of judges over the twelve tribes (Matt. 19:28; Luke 22:29-30). The New Jerusalem is built upon twelve foundations and in these are the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb (Eph. 2:20 cf. Rev. 21:14).
- Upon the rejection of the kingdom and the initiation of the “mystery” (i.e. the Church per Eph. 3:1-12), the apostolic office was invested with new qualities:
- the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4)
- the foundation stones of the new temple (Eph. 2:20-22)
- the responsibility to preach glad tidings of salvation based upon the work of Christ on the Cross and authority over the churches
- An apostle had to be an eyewitness of the resurrection (Acts 1:22; 1 Cor. 9:1)

It is on the basis of the above that we can conclude that there are only twelve who ever held or will ever hold the office of apostle.

#### *Non-Technical Usage in the Bible:*

There is a generalized or non-technical manner in which the word is used in some passages. For instance, in Acts 14:4, 14 it is used of Barnabas as well as of Paul. In Rom. 16:7 it is used of Andronicus and Junias. In 2 Cor. 8:23, two unnamed brethren are called apostles. In Phil. 2:25 Epaphroditus is referred to as an apostle. It is used in 1 Thess. 2:6 of Paul, Silas and Timothy to define their relation to Christ. In Hebrews 3:1, it is used of Christ as our apostle and High Priest.

#### *The Ministry of An Apostle:*

- Laying the foundation of the church (Eph. 2:20)
- Confirming in the sense of authenticating the Word preached (2 Cor. cf. Heb. 2:3-4)
- Oversight of the churches (Acts 8:14 and 15:1-29)

#### *Post-Apostolic Age Distortions of the Gift:*

Some today claim to be “apostles” based upon the fact that the word was sometimes used in the non-technical sense in the New Testament to refer to the work of those who did not hold the office and gift. However, the following arguments can be advanced against those who hold such a position:

- The actual “gift” of apostleship in Scripture was always clearly used in the restrictive sense
- Not every minister of the gospel in the apostolic age held the designation “apostle”
- The person who had the gift of apostle and held the office in the Apostolic age also possessed other gifts such as healing, performing miracles, etc. which are known to have been temporary in nature (2 Cor. 12:8-12). These gifts were designed to validate their apostleship
- Those who were given the gift of “apostle” had to have been eyewitnesses of the resurrection of Jesus
- The New Testament canon is now completed. If anyone claims to now do all that those with the gift of apostle did, why is it that no one is legitimately writing Scripture?

- Every Church Age believer is “responsible” to the Lord for some activities which were also the “responsibility” of an “apostle” in the pre-canon period, i.e. witnessing, praying, etc. In some cases, the responsibilities of the pastor-teacher and teacher today overlap with those of the apostle in the pre-canon period of the Church Age. However, a similarity of responsibility does not equate to the same gift.

## 2. Prophecy

Definition: The gift of “prophecy” allowed the one so gifted to utter exhortations, instructions, predictions and warnings as a result of immediate divine revelation. In many cases, the one so gifted had the ability to foretell the future and then to forth tell or courageously preach that prediction to the people. However, the predictive element was secondary to the proclamation of direct revelation from God. (Terminated in 96 AD).

Greek: There are primarily three Greek words relating to the gift of prophecy, i.e. *propheteia*, *prophetes*, and *propheteuo*. (*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, by Walter Bauer, pages 722-724).

- 1) *Propheteia* (noun) is used for prophetic activity by the one possessing the gift. Examples of the use of this Greek word are found in passages such as Mt. 13:14; Ro. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:10; 13:2; 14:22; 1 Ti. 1:18; 4:14; 2 Pet. 1:20; and Rv. 11:6; 22:7, 10, 18 among others.
- 2) *Prophetes* (noun) is used to refer to the one possessing the gift. In Greek pagan religions, it denoted an interpreter of the oracles of the gods. Examples of the use of this Greek word are found in passages such as Mt. 2:17; 3:3; 4:14:8:17; 14:5; 21:26; 27:9; Mk. 11:32; Lk. 1:76; 3:4; John 1:23; 12:38; Acts 15:32; 28:25; and 1 Cor. 14:29, 32, 37 just to list a few.
- 3) *Propheteuo* (verb) is used to mean to proclaim a divine revelation (which may have had no bearing on the future), to reveal what was hidden, and to foretell the future. Examples of the use of this Greek word in Scripture include Mt. 11:13; 15:7; Mk. 7:6; 1 Pt. 1:10; 26:68; Lu. 22:64; Acts 2:17; 19:6; 21:9; 1 Cor. 11:4; 13:9; 14:1, 3-5, 24, 31, 39; and Rev. 11:3, 11 to list a few.

### Take note:

- In 1 Cor. 12:28 the gift of prophecy is listed second only to the gift of apostle in the founding days of the Church.  
The fact is that prophets are the only officers of the church mentioned in all four lists of spiritual gifts. This should give some gauge to their importance.
- The importance of the gift is reiterated by Paul in Eph. 2:20 where we are told that the household of God is “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.” The gifts of apostle and prophet passed after the foundation of the Church was established.
- The proclamation of direct revelation from God and the predictive element of the gift of prophecy distinguished the gift of prophecy from the teaching gifts.
- Even the gift of “apostle” had a prophetic element to it per 1 Cor. 2:7 and 13. The fact that Paul possessed prophetic insight is evidenced by his direct guidance from God in passages such as Acts 16:6ff; 18:9-10; 22:17-21; 27:23-24. This is different from the guidance of the Holy Spirit as one of the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the Church Age believer today in that today there is no predictive or direct revelatory element associated with the guiding or leading ministry of the

Holy Spirit such as is found in Acts 16:9-10; 18:9-10; 22:17-22; 27:23-24. In all probability, all of the apostles also possessed the gift of prophecy.

- The Age of Israel “prophet” is distinguished from those possessing the “gift” of prophecy in the Church Age in that the Age of Israel prophet often had the character of a national leader, reformer, and patriot and delivered his message normally to Israel. The person who possessed the gift of prophecy in the Church Age had no such national characteristics and only filled a temporary void in terms of divine revelation until the Canon of Scripture was completed.

#### Technical Usage for the Gift of Prophecy:

The technical use of the gift of prophecy is always related to the direct revelation of new truth. Sometimes the exercise of the gift resulted in predictive messages such as the prediction by Agabus concerning a coming famine in Acts 11:27-28 and his declaration that sufferings and perhaps death awaited Paul in the future in Acts 21:10-14. Barnabas and others are mentioned among the prophets and teachers at Antioch in Acts 13:1. The four daughters of Philip possessed the gift of prophecy per Acts 21:9. Judas and Silas were prophets per Acts 15:32.

#### Non-Technical Usage of the Gift of Prophecy:

There is a generalized or non-technical manner in which prophecy is used in certain passages of the Bible to address the responsibilities of one believer to another. Paul sets forth regulations for the use of gifts in the local assembly in 1 Cor. 14:26ff. In this passage, Paul states in verses 29-33 that prophesy could occur among individual members of the congregation. This type of prophesying was not limited to men per 1 Cor. 11:4-5. Consider the following quote taken from Dr. Constable’s notes in a class taken at DTS entitled “Acts and Pauline Epistles” in which he comments in regard to 1 Cor. 14:29-31: Likewise the prophets should minister in an orderly fashion and limit themselves to two or three messages at a service.

The others in the congregation should pay attention to what they said. The Greek word *diakrino* means “pass judgment” (NASB). In 12:10 it reads “distinguish.” Here it probably means to evaluate carefully and, if need be, to reject if the ministry was not in harmony with Scripture. Here we seem to have an example of two of the different kinds of prophesying that took place in the early church conflicting with each other. What Paul seems to have envisioned was one person - men and women could prophesy in this sense (11:4-5) - sharing a word from the Lord. This type of prophesying was open to almost anyone in the church. While this person was speaking, another prophet received a revelation from the Lord. This appears to be a more direct revelation than just the desire to address the congregation that had moved the first speaker to minister. In such a case the first speaker was to give preference to the person making the new revelation. Presumably the first speaker would finish what he was saying later.

#### The Ministry of a Prophet:

Before the completion of the canon of Scripture, prophets were the inspired revealers of God’s teaching to the churches. This edifying aspect to the gift is what Paul had in mind in 1 Cor. 14:3ff where he places the gift of prophecy in a more prominent position than the gift of tongues.

Prophecy had as its basic purpose the building up of believers by verbalized inspired messages from God concerning faith and practice of the new “mystery” doctrines of the Church Age. As such the “prophets” of the early Church Age fulfilled a need which was later to be filled by the completed canon.

### Post-Canon Distortions of the Gift:

Today, some claim that the gift of prophecy is a gift of the Holy Spirit which is given today. I believe that those who claim that the “gift” of prophecy is a valid gift today use the “non-technical” passages which refer to “prophesying” to validate their position. We have not received any “direct” revelation from God since 96 AD even though the Holy Spirit illuminates the believer regarding the meaning and application of the canon of Scripture.

**John Walvoord** writes on page 178 in his book *The Holy Spirit* that even though prophets were men and women “...who could err in judgment and conduct, as illustrated in Peter’s compromise with legalism, in their prophetic messages they must be kept from error. Accordingly, there is no reference in the New Testament to anyone teaching error who is designated a true prophet.” If anyone claims to have the gift of prophecy today and claims that he has received direct revelation from God, then he is contradicting existing Scripture which explicitly states that prophecy shall cease per 1 Cor. 13:8.

If the gift of prophecy was given by God to the Church for the purpose of establishing its foundation in sound doctrine, what legitimate purpose could the person who alleges to exercise the gift today expect to accomplish in view of the fact that the Church’s foundation (the canon of Scripture) is complete?

The Church faced its first major controversy over this issue in 150 AD. A Christian convert named Montanus claimed that the supernatural gifts of apostle and prophet were renewed in him and his two prophetesses so that new revelations could be given through them which superseded the Scriptures. At his baptism, Montanus spoke in “tongues” and began “prophesying”. Among their numerous prophecies were warnings that the second coming of Christ was at hand. They believed that their prophecies clarified the Scriptures and that Spirit-inspired prophets would continue to arise in the Christian community. The whole movement appeared to be a response to a perception (real or imagined) that lax practices had begun to arise in the Church. For instance, they claimed that second marriages were wrong. They secured their most famous convert when Tertullian became a Montanist. This movement did not have a lasting impact upon the Church as is true of any movement rooted in Scriptural error.

### **3. Word of Wisdom**

Definition: the “Gift” of a “Word of Wisdom” was one of the foundational gifts (similar to and often associated with the gift of Apostle and of Prophecy) given by the Holy Spirit to the early Church in order to determine God’s viewpoint in the newly initiated Church Age in a particular situation. It was a Spirit guided intuition into the otherwise unknowable mysteries of God. (Ceased by 96 AD)

Greek: No notes at this time.

Take note:

- The “Gift” of the “Word of Wisdom” is mentioned only once in the four lists of spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:8).
- It is likely that the gift of the “Word of Wisdom” was one of the several gifts that accompanied the gift of apostle and of prophet. It is also possible that the apostles and prophets were the only ones who ever possessed this gift.
- Consider the following quote from one writer:  
It must be remembered that 1 Corinthians is one of the earlier epistles, written in all probability before A.D. 57. When it was penned there was practically no New Testament in existence, except the epistle of James addressed to Hebrew Christians and 1 and 2 Thessalonians. But there were no New Testament manuscripts to preach from. The Old Testament, of course, was available for study, but it did not cover the great distinctive teachings of the new age. The question may be asked; would the Corinthian assembly meet and have a teaching ministry? The answer is yes. God graciously endowed the early church with special revelatory gifts of prophecy, tongues (when interpreted), and knowledge. These special temporary gifts met an urgent need. They were designed to tide the church through the period of partial, piecemeal revelation until the complete and final thing would arrive (1 Cor.13:10).
- It appears to me that this gift served the purpose of providing supernatural understanding of previously revealed truth (either from the Old Testament or Church Age truth that had been revealed to other writers of Scripture) as it applied to the newly inaugurated Church Age.

Technical Usage for the Gift of the Word of Wisdom:

The technical references to the gift of the Word of Wisdom are related to the functions mentioned previously. In the Sovereign purpose of God, these functions were no longer necessary once the Canon of Scripture was completed in 96 AD.

Non-technical Uses:

There are a multitude of non-technical uses of “wisdom” in the New Testament. In all such cases, the “gift” is not the focus of these passages. The focus of these passages is the quality or characteristic of “wisdom”. For example:

- In James 1:5, we are told to ask for wisdom. Note that James says “if anyone”. Not every believer possesses the “gift” of wisdom.
- In 1 Corinthians 2:9-13, wisdom is related to the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit.
- Jesus is said to have grown in “wisdom” in Luke 2:40 and 52. His “wisdom” was manifest later in life as he continually amazed people with his insight into the Old Testament Scriptures. Luke 2:47 as one example.

The Ministry of the Believer Who Had the Gift of the Word of Wisdom:

In the Scriptures, the gift of the “Word of Wisdom” was manifested in three principle manners:

- 1) To assist the disciples in the midst of persecution. Example: Luke 21:14-15 (Jesus promised wisdom to the disciples when they would be brought before courts for the cause of Christ), Acts 4:13

(Peter and John defend themselves before the council), and Acts 6:10 (Stephen's opposition was not able to resist his spiritual logic).

2) Interpreting God's purposes in the infant Church. Example: Acts 15:13-28 in which James used new insight into Old Testament Scripture to explain God's purpose for the Gentiles to the Jerusalem Council.

3) Communication to the early Church and the writing of Scripture by the Apostles. Example: 2 Peter 3:15-16 in which Peter writes regarding Paul's manifestation of this gift through his writings. Another example is Paul's statement in 1 Cor. 2:7-8.

#### Post Canon Distortions of the Gift:

Anyone who claims to have new "Revelation" from God today usually claims to possess the gift of a "word of wisdom" or a "word of knowledge".

### **4. Word of Knowledge**

Definition: this gift provided needed knowledge on a subject before that knowledge was available in the completed Canon of Scripture. (Ceased by 96 AD)

Greek: No notes at this time.

#### Take note:

- It is very likely that this gift (like the gift of a "word of wisdom") was a companion gift to that of apostle or prophecy.
- This gift served the purpose of providing needed knowledge on a subject (where no previous revelation regarding the subject could be found) before that knowledge was available in the completed canon of Scripture. This is different from the word of wisdom gift in that the gift of the word of wisdom provided new revelation of the Church Age application of previous revelation.

#### Technical Usage for the Gift of the Word of Knowledge:

Clear examples of this gift in action in Scripture are non-existent. However, the following are possibilities even though there may be some overlap with other temporary gifts that are functioning since each example involves an apostle and apostles manifested the function of more than one spiritual gift.

- Peter probably manifested the Gift of the Word of Knowledge in Acts 5:3-4 in relation to Ananias and his wife.
- Another possible example of the use of this gift (although overlapping to some degree with the gift of prophecy) is found in Acts 27:21-24 in which Paul encourages the members of a ship's crew in the midst of a storm.
- John probably manifested the gift in writing Revelation 2 and 3 by revealing things right and wrong which were hidden in the heart of each church.

#### Non-technical Uses:

We are encouraged in the Scriptures to grow in knowledge per 2 Tim. 2:15. The “gift” was never meant to replace knowledge acquired, but to augment it with knowledge unacquirable.

*The Ministry of the Believer Who Had the Gift of the Word of Knowledge:*

The believer who possessed the gift could declare truth far beyond the normal and natural capabilities of the individual to assimilate knowledge through diligent study as is encouraged in 2 Tim. 2:15.

*Post Canon Distortions of the Gift:*

Anyone who claims to have new “Revelation” from God today usually claims to possess the gift of a “Word of Wisdom” or a “Word of Knowledge”.

## **5. Discerning of Spirits**

*Definition:* this gift provided the ability to know whether the person who professed to be a spokesperson for God was a true spokesperson or a false spokesperson. (Ceased by 96 AD)

*Greek:* No notes at this time.

*Take note:*

This gift was not related to an ability to discern “evil spirits” from “good spirits”. Rather, this gift pertained to the ability to perceive the inner motivation of a human spokesperson. 1 John 4:2 is one of the tests that such a person who possessed the gift would apply and the word “spirit” in this verse is a reference to humans, not non-human creatures.

*Technical Usage for the Gift of the Discerning of Spirits:*

This gift would have been used in the early Church to fulfill the command found in 1 Corinthians 14:32 where the spirits of the prophets were to be subject to the prophets and their utterances evaluated carefully per 1 Corinthians 14:29; 1 Thess. 5:20; 1 John 4:1-2; and Rev. 2:2.

*Non-technical Usages:*

- An example of the type of person who might prophesy falsely, but who was detected as one who possessed a false spirit is found in Acts 8:4-25. This passage does not illustrate the use of the gift, however it illustrates the type of person who would have been discerned as possessing a false spirit had he been allowed to continue and if Peter had not called his hand.
- As is true of most spiritual gifts, there is a measure to which every believer is responsible in his/her priesthood or ambassadorship to implement activities similar to the person who possesses the gift. For instance, I’m sure that every believer in the Berean Church did not possess the gift of the discerning of spirits, however Acts 17:11 notes in regard to the Berean believers that they “...were more noble minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily...”
- Every believer is commanded to try the spirits per 1 John 4:1.

*The Ministry of the Believer Who Had the Gift of the Discerning of Spirits:*



The believer with this gift served as a check and balance mechanism against those believers (and unbelievers possibly) who might arise in the early Church and claim to be speaking an utterance from God. Most likely those who arose claimed to be speaking with the gift of prophecy, the gift of a word of wisdom or a word of knowledge. However, in some cases, the lust pattern of the sin nature might be the motivation for such activity so that they were pushing their own agenda rather than simply being a vehicle that God could use.

Post Canon Distortions of the Gift:

Today, there are those who claim to be able to discern “evil spirits” in regard to bodily ailments. They claim that the afflicted person has a demon related to whatever the affliction might be, e.g. an eye demon, a joint demon, etc. This alleged use of the gift is non-Biblical.

## **6. Faith**

Definition: this gift was a supernatural ability to trust God in a matter before there was the completed Canon of Scripture. (Ceased by 96 AD).

Greek: No notes at this time.

Take note:

- The primary reason that I believe that this gift is no longer functional in the Church is that I cannot see how it might be exercised today as separate and distinct from the growth in knowledge and application that is required from every believer.
- As the believer grows in Christian character (one of the seven manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the life of the yielded believer), he/she will manifest the fruit of the Spirit, one of which is faithfulness (Gal 5:22).
- If every Church Age believer is given the same spiritual assets at salvation (with the exception of a different spiritual gift for service) and has a completed Canon of Scripture, what could the person with the gift of faith do that is different than the person who is totally yielded to the Holy Spirit and manifesting Christ like character in his/her life?
- To claim that this gift still functions in the post-Canon period of the Church Age seems to me to only give some believers an illegitimate reason to excuse their lack of Christian growth. (Remember that a believer can be legitimately immature or a believer can be illegitimately immature. I'm referring to the believer who is illegitimately immature in knowledge and/or application and who is searching for an excuse for his/her failures. We all fail, but there is no legitimate excuse on the part of the illegitimately immature believer. Just be honest with yourself and God. Don't deceive yourself or allow yourself to be deceived about your spiritual status).

Technical Usage for the Gift of Faith:

- As a general rule, it is possible that the gift of faith was also a companion gift to the gift of apostle in the same manner that the gifts of prophecy, word of wisdom and word of knowledge were possibly companion gifts to the gift of apostle. Consider Romans 12:6.
- Stephen possibly had the gift of faith based upon the testimony of Scripture in Acts 6:5-8.
- Paul exhorts believers not to focus upon the pursuit of spiritual gifts to the exclusion of the development of Christian character in 1 Corinthians 13. In verse 2, he states that even though the

believer might have the gift of faith so as to remove mountains, if he didn't have love (a fruit of the Spirit resulting from Christian character), it was useless.

#### Non-technical Uses:

The believer is encouraged to maintain and grow in the faith in such passages as Romans 10:17; 1 Cor. 16:13; Eph. 6:16; Col. 2:5; 1 Thess. 5:8; 2 Thess. 1:3; 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 4:7; and James 1:3. These passages do not refer to the "gift" of faith, but are references to the responsibility of every believer.

#### The Ministry of the Believer Who had the Gift:

In the formative days of the Church, there was persecution from every angle. The gift of faith gave supernatural confidence in the midst of the persecution that God's will would prevail and allowed the person possessing the gift to encourage others. Such was the case with Stephen, Paul, Peter, James, John, and others before their experiences became a part of the completed Canon of Scripture.

#### Post Canon Distortions of the Gift:

I believe that in most if not all cases where a person believes that the gift of faith is one of the gifts given to believers today, that person interprets Ephesians 2:8-9 to mean that **saving faith** is a **gift** of God. If this is true, then many distortions are the natural consequence. For instance, there is a general tendency by those who hold such a position to overemphasize the Sovereignty of God when discussing the free will of man.

## **7. Healings**

Definition: the supernatural ability to restore a diseased body to full health (terminated by 96 AD).

Greek: In 1 Corinthians 12:9, 28, and 30, the Greek word or phrase used for this gift is *chrismata iamaton*. Both of these Greek words are in the plural and are properly translated in the NASV as "gifts of healings". Since there are different kinds of sicknesses, there are different kinds of healings.

#### Take note:

- The exercise of the gifts of healings did not require faith on the part of the person to be healed. For instance, consider the case of Peter's healing of the lame man in Acts 3:1-11. The lame man neither expected to be healed nor did he ask to be healed. His faith is not mentioned. His healing was a discretionary act of the Apostle Peter.
- The purpose of this gift was to confirm the message of the messenger. See Hebrews 2:3-4.
- The gifts of healings were among the "signs and wonders and mighty deeds which Paul indicated were the "sign" of an apostle in 2 Corinthians 12:12. Paul authenticates his claim to the office of Apostle by the "signs" done by him.
- The fact that the gifts of healings were temporary is confirmed by the following comparison of passages. At one point in Paul's ministry, special miracles were performed by his hands per Acts 19:12 during his third missionary journey circa 54-55 AD. Yet, in 1 Timothy 5:23 (written about 63

AD), Paul writes to Timothy that he should take a little wine for his stomach ailment. In 2 Timothy 4:2 (written about 66 AD), Paul notes that he had to leave Trophimus ill at Miletus.

#### Technical Usage for the Gift of Healings:

- Examples of the use of this gift include the following:
- Acts 3:1-11 - Peter heals a lame man at the gate of the temple
- Acts 5:12-16 - multitudes came out into the streets of Jerusalem to be healed by Peter
- Acts 8:5-7 - Philip exercised the gift in Samaria
- Acts 19:11-12 - Paul exhibits the gift

#### Non-technical Uses:

To my knowledge, there are no “non-technical” uses of this gift in the Bible which can be confused with the “technical” use of the gift of healing. Of course, there is a general sense in which God still (as He always has) heals those who He desires to heal in response to their prayers or other believer’s prayers on their behalf.

#### The Ministry of the Believer Who Had the Gift of Healings:

Most of the examples in the Bible where the gifts of healings are manifest involve the Apostles. The healings were simply to serve the purpose of confirming the messenger and his message.

#### Post Canon Distortions of the Gift:

Those who claim to have the gifts of healings today are deceived individuals and they can only be pushing their own agenda apart from what is taught in the Scripture regarding this gift. The “healings” which do occur are either the result of the natural healing process, God’s intervention apart from human agency, or they are Satanic in origin. (If Satan can do what Jesus said he did in Luke 13:10-17, then Satan could certainly undo it). There is a third possibility that the “healing” is only a temporary psychosomatic cure that allows the afflicted individual some temporary relief.

## **8. Miracles**

Definition: the supernatural ability to change the very nature of something (terminated 96 AD).

Greek: no notes at this time.

#### Take note:

- Some believe that when the Apostle Paul referred to miracles, he was referring in a general way to other gifts such as healings, tongues, and the gift of the interpretation of tongues. (See J. Dwight Pentecost, *The Divine Comforter*, 180). However, even though it may be true that we don’t see many, if any, examples of this gift being exhibited separate and apart from other “miraculous” gifts by an individual, I believe it to be a separate gift by virtue of the fact that it is mentioned separately. It just may have been held in common with other spiritual gifts.
- Examples of the presence of miracles as distinct from healings in the pre-Canon period of the Church Age are few and far between. Examples (all of which do not involve the function of the gift) would include the following:
- The movement of Philip to Azotus after baptizing the eunuch (Acts 8:38-40)
- The release of Peter from prison (Acts 5:19; 12:6ff)

- An earthquake which accomplished the release of Paul and Silas from prison (Acts 16:26)
- The Bible contains many instances of miracles that occurred, however miracles are not indiscriminately strewn over every page of Scripture. Rather, we find miracles grouped in three great periods of history each of which lasted about 70 years:
  - The period of Moses and Joshua
  - The period of Elijah and Elisha when Baal worship was at its peak in Israel
  - The period of Christ and the Apostles
- In each instance, God was using the miracles to authenticate the message and the messenger and the period marked a transition point in human history. For instance:
  - Moses and Joshua - God was forming a nation
  - Elijah and Elisha - God was appealing to the Jews to forsake idol worship and return to Him and shortly thereafter, the Northern Kingdom went into Assyrian captivity
  - Christ and the Apostles - the Kingdom of God was offered and the Church was ushered in to replace the previous administration
- This doesn't mean that there were no miracles apart from these periods of history, e.g. Daniel delivered in the lion's den and the period of the judges. In most cases, the purpose of the miracle was to confirm the message of the messenger.

#### Technical Usage for the Gift of Miracles:

The fact that miraculous events occurred at the hands of the Apostles is attested in 2 Corinthians 12:12. However, specific examples of the function of the gift apart from healings are few and far between.

#### Non-technical Usages:

I am not aware of any "non-technical" uses of the gift of miracles even there are a number of instances in which miracles occurred apart from the gift.

#### The Ministry of the Believer Who Had the Gift of Miracles:

Most of the examples in the Bible where the gift of miracles is manifest involve the Apostles. The miracles were simply to serve the purpose of confirming the messenger and his message.

#### Post Canon Distortions of the Gift:

Jesus categorized those who continually sought after a sign during His public ministry as being part of an evil and adulterous generation (Matt. 12:39). The same could be said of those in the Church Age (past, present, and future) who seek such external evidence to believe. Miracles are not the ultimate proof of truth. In His teaching regarding the entrance into the Kingdom, Jesus indicated that there would be many who would perform miracles in His name, but He would reject their works as a basis for entering the Kingdom (Matthew 7:21-23). Of course, this implies that there were miracles which in fact occurred, but the basis of these miracles was not grounded in truth. The same thing occurs in the Tribulation per Matthew 24:24; 2 Thess. 2:8-12; and Rev. 13:13-15. If the primary purpose God allowed certain individuals to perform miracles in the Bible was to confirm their message and the messenger, and no new Scripture is being added today, then for one to claim he has miraculous powers is tantamount to claiming he has the gift of Apostle. The gift ceased by 96 AD if not before.

## **9. Tongues**

Definition: the supernatural ability to speak in language which was unknown to the speaker, but understood by the hearer. (Ceased A.D. 70).

Greek: *glossa* - refers to the literal tongue in such passages as Acts 2:26 and 1 Cor. 14:9 among others **or** to a known "language" in such passages as Acts 2:6, 11 and Rom. 14:11 among others. (*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* by Walter Bauer, 162).

Take note:

- Outside of Paul's teaching regarding the gift of tongues in 1 Cor. 12:10, 28, 30; and 14:1-40, the only passages which document the function of the gift are found in Acts 2:1-13 (Pentecost), Acts 10:46 (cf. 11:15 which follows the conversion of Cornelius in 10:23ff esp. v. 46), and Acts 19:6 (conversion of some of John the Baptist's disciples).
- The passages in Acts do not explain the gift, nor is there any evidence that the experience was repeated by those who had part in these instances. Outside of 1 Corinthians, there is no exposition of the doctrine in any of the Epistles.
- Many will agree that the speaking in tongues in Acts consisted of known languages (see Acts 2:6, 8). Acts 11:15 expressly states that the phenomenon of speaking in tongues in Caesarea was similar to the experience at Pentecost. While no such statement is made regarding Acts 19, it would be arbitrary and strained exegesis to make a distinction when none is made in the text.
- However, there exists confusion as to whether the tongues referred to in 1 Corinthians is more akin to ecstatic utterances in which human language was not used and which would require the gift of interpretation to interpret.
- The use of identical terms in reference to speaking with tongues in Acts and in 1 Corinthians leaves no foundation for a distinction. In all passages, the same vocabulary is used.
- Therefore, to claim a distinction exists between the "tongues" of Acts and the "tongues" of 1 Corinthians must be based upon faulty exegesis and imperfect induction which can only mean eisegesis.
- In Acts 2, the 120 disciples gathered in the Upper Room were given the gift of tongues. This manifestation of the gift of tongues served a dual purpose. It was a sign to the Jews and it evidenced the fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy regarding the "Comforter" which He prophesied in John 16. Acts 2 is sometimes referred to as the Jewish Pentecost.
- In Acts 10, the gift of tongues served the purpose of confirming that Gentiles could accept the gospel on the same basis as the Jews and were equal recipients of the Holy Spirit as the Jewish converts.
- In Acts 19, the experience served the purpose of confirming the faith of new believers in the Church Age who received the gospel of Jesus' death and resurrection as opposed to the gospel of the kingdom which John had been preaching.
- In each case in Acts, the phenomenon was present only at the beginning of the Christian experience. The Acts is silent regarding any other similar instances.
- This leaves unanswered the questions which surround the meaning of certain statements Paul makes in 1 Corinthians such as those found in 1 Cor. 14:2 ("...for no one understands, but in his spirit he speaks mysteries...") and 14:14 ("For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful").
- In 1 Corinthians 12:10 & 28, speaking in tongues is mentioned last in a list of spiritual gifts.

- In 1 Corinthians 13, Paul discusses the worthlessness of spiritual gifts apart from love as a fruit of the Spirit. Also, tongues will cease per 1 Cor. 13:8.
- In 1 Corinthians 14, a number of important points are made regarding the use of tongues.
- Tongues are declared inferior to prophecy as a means of edification, exhortation, and comfort in verses 1-12.
- Tongues should not be used in an assembly unless an interpreter is present (verses 13-20).
- Tongues are declared to be a sign to unbelievers (particularly Jews) in verses 21-22. See a further discussion of this point below.
- However, if not done in order, tongues will fail to convince unbelievers (verse 23).
- Prophecy is declared to be the greater gift used to edify believers (verses 24-25).
- Tongues (and the gift of prophecy) should be regulated and used only when it will result in edification of the church in verses 26-38.
- Speaking in tongues was not to be forbidden, but the gift of prophecy was superior and to be coveted (verse 39).
- Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians 14 is that gifts are for the edification of others. If believers who had speaking gifts such as prophecy and tongues were to speak at will in the local assembly, chaos would result. They could not be understood by others and the person speaking in tongues would only edify themselves (verses 3 & 4) without an interpreter present (verses 27 & 28). Furthermore, tongues were for the purpose of giving a message to unbelievers. If no unbeliever was present who understood the language being uttered, what benefit the gift of tongues would be to the body of believers assembled in the church who did not speak that language (verses 9 & 11).

*Technical Uses of the Gift of Tongues:*

See *Other Comments* section above. Also, more needs to be said regarding the greater context of and the purpose of the gift of tongues.