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## ***Spiritual Gifts in the Church Age***

### **Introductory Thoughts**

The fact that each believer in the Church Age is given a spiritual gift at the moment of salvation is supported by Scripture and is virtually undisputed by orthodox Christianity. Every Scripture is subject to interpretation even though the translation may be quite clear. One's interpretation of any given passage should be governed by a consistently applied hermeneutic. However, even among those who are dispensational oriented, there can be disagreement with regard to the interpretation of some passages. It is my opinion that in most (if not all) cases where there is such disagreement, there has been a failure to properly synthesize one's understanding of one doctrine with another as it relates to the passage at issue.

These notes reflect my honest attempt to approach the subject with objectivity based upon my current understanding. Over time, I hope to refine and add to the observations, interpretations, applications, and correlations of Scripture contain herein. Even so, I believe the hermeneutical approach I have used is sound and any future modifications will more than likely be due to increased spiritual insight rather than any changes in hermeneutical approach.

### **Springboard Passage - 1 Corinthians 12:4-7**

"[v. 4] Now there are **varieties of gifts**, but the **same Spirit**. [v.5] And there are **varieties of ministries**, and the **same Lord**. [v.6] And there are **varieties of effects**, but the **same God** who works all things in all *persons*. [v. 7] But to **each one** is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good."

#### *Basic Observations regarding this passage:*

1. This passage indicates that there are numerous gifts (v. 4). The context (12:1) indicates that spiritual gifts are the topic.
2. There is one Spirit (v. 4).

3. This passage indicates that there are numerous “ministries” (v. 5).
4. There is one “Lord” (v. 5).
5. This passage indicates that there are numerous “effects” or results (v. 6).
6. There is “the same God” (v. 6).
7. God is said to work “all things in all” (v. 6). Note that “persons” is italicized which indicates that it is not a part of the original text per the best manuscripts.
8. The purpose of spiritual gifts is for the “common good”.

*Evaluation/ Interpretation of this passage:*

1. Context is always a critical issue in the evaluation/interpretation of any passage.

Paul first ministered in Corinth on his second missionary journey (AD 50). He lived and worked with Aquilla and Priscilla and preached in the synagogue until opposition from the Judaizers forced the church to move to the house of Titius Justus. (The Jews accused him before the Roman governor Gallio, but charges were dismissed). Paul remained 18 months in Corinth during 51 and 52 AD (Acts 18:1-17 and 1 Cor. 2:3).

From Corinth, Paul went to Ephesus with Priscilla and Acquilla. He returned to Ephesus on his third missionary journey and stayed there for three years (53 - 56 AD, see Acts 20:31). Paul arrived in Ephesus from Antioch shortly after the departure of Apollos for Corinth, but Apollos is back in Ephesus when Paul writes the letter (1 Corinthians) and he (Apollos) has declined Paul’s request to go back to Corinth (1 Cor. 16:12). Some of the household of “Chloe” had heard or come from Corinth with full details of the factions in the church over Apollos and Paul. This was possibly the reason why Apollos left (1 Cor. 1:10-12).

- Paul had sent Timothy to Corinth to put an end to the factions ( 1 Cor. 4:17), but he was uneasy with regard to the outcome (16:10ff).
- Paul had previously written a letter to the Corinthian believers (the “lost letter”) regarding the church’s dealing with the case of incest by one of its members (5:9).
- Church members were suing each other in the world’s courts.
- There were questions regarding marriage that reflected some confusing and non-spiritual ideas (7:1). There were concerns by some members regarding their rights to eat meat sacrificed to idols (8:1).
- Spiritual gifts were being abused and misunderstood (12:1).
- They were confused about the doctrine of the resurrection (15:12).

Chapter 12 is right in the middle of Chapters 8-14 in which Paul is teaching and exhorting the Corinthian believers concerning their responsibility to others in certain areas. The Corinthians were not too unlike us today in that they lived in a city (we live in an entire society) in which they had access to all that the world had to offer. Corinth was a port city and a wealthy commercial center. Entertainment opportunities abounded. For instance, the city had an outdoor theater that seated 20,000 people. Athletic games second only to the Olympics were held there. The temple of Aphrodite

with approximately 1000 temple prostitutes was located there. Taverns were ever present. Distraction from one's spiritual objectives in Christ was all too easy. A temporary escape from the boredom of normal life was just around the corner. In such an environment, a self-centered approach to life in which the believer was constantly looking for instant gratification and focused upon only his own needs had become the norm. Spiritual dullness and the attendant lack of even a desire for a spiritual impact was the result.

It is in this context that Paul instructs and exhorts the Corinthians regarding their spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12. Their selfishness and self-centered approach to life had affected their view of the various spiritual gifts. Selfishness (v. 7) and disunity (v. 25) resulted in chaos (14:23, 33, 40). Paul was very aware that this situation was only exacerbated by the presence of false teachers. In 12:1-3, Paul pre-empts any arguments which might be advanced by false teachers by providing a test for such men which involved the person of Christ. It is likely that these early false teachers denied the humanity of Christ as expressed by the words "Jesus be cursed".

No doubt these Jewish false teachers claimed to have their own revelation from God and by denying Jesus' humanity, they were in effect denying His claim to be the Son of God. After all, the earliest Christological heresy (Docetism) denied Jesus' humanity, even though it did not deny His deity. Another similar heresy (Gnosticism) claimed that matter was evil, therefore the body was viewed as evil. (John dealt with the same problem years later in 1 John 4:1-3). Only believers speaking under the influence of the Holy Spirit would say that Jesus is Lord.

2. In 1 Corinthians 12:4-7, unity in diversity is the theme.
3. In 1 Corinthians 12:4-7, the Trinity is mentioned.
4. In 1 Corinthians 12:4, the "...unity in diversity theme is repeated in this chapter, as witnessed by the identifying adjective use of *autos*In other words there is a relationship between the diversity of gifts and the unified source, i.e. the Spirit. This "Spirit" is the Holy Spirit in context (v. 3).
5. In 1 Corinthians 12:5, the same theme occurs with a relationship being drawn between the diversity of ministries and the unified source of ministries, i.e. the Lord (Jesus Christ per v. 3).
6. In 1 Corinthians 12:6, the same theme occurs again with a relationship being established between the different effects or results and the unified source who is God the Father.
7. In 1 Corinthians 12:6, God the Father is said to work "all things in all" with regard to spiritual gifts among believers in the same way He works "all things" to His glory with regard to the universe in Rom. 11:36 In 1 Corinthians 12:7, the believer is given only one spiritual gift. Since every believer does not have the same gift, there is diversity.
8. The unifying purpose of spiritual gifts among believers should be for the "common good". Spiritual gifts are to be used for the benefit of others.

*Application of 1 Corinthians 12:4-7:*

1. Even though believers have different spiritual gifts, their gift is not to be used for selfish purposes (i.e. approbation lust, power lust, self glorification, etc.). 1 Corinthians 12:14-17.
2. The spiritual gift given to the believer is to be used to benefit others.
3. If the believer is properly using his/her spiritual gift, he/she will be crucifying self for the benefit of others.
4. Each believer has only one spiritual gift (v. 7 compared with v. 11). 1 Corinthians 12:15 and 1 Peter 4:10.
5. Spiritual gifts are given to glorify God (Christ). John 16:14.
6. Spiritual gifts are given for a spiritual battle. 2 Corinthians 10:4.
7. The granting of any particular gift to a believer is an act of God's Sovereignty through the Holy Spirit. We don't choose what gift we are given. 1 Corinthians 12:11.
8. Ministry opportunities should be pursued by volunteers using their spiritual gift. When people are asked to involve themselves in a ministry (such as by a nominating committee), it can become a source of pride and division.
9. You don't need anyone's approval to use your spiritual gift unless the area in which you desire to use your gift involves someone else's area of authority.
10. You don't need to "seek" a gift. All you need to do is to identify what has already been given to you.
11. Even though a believer has only one spiritual gift, he can function in the area of another spiritual gift to the extent he has yielded himself to God (the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) in the study and application of the Word. The more we become like Christ, the more and manifold ways we can be used to manifest Him.
12. The believer should never be concerned about the results of the proper exercise of his spiritual gift. The results are the responsibility of the Father per 1 Cor. 12:6.
13. Any two believers with the same gift may have different results. The believer does not chose either his gift, his ministry, or his results.
14. Any two believers with the same gift may have different ministries. Ministries are opportunities for gift function.
15. A spiritual gift should be distinguished from a talent. A gift is the result of a grace action on the part of God toward the believer. A talent is related to the flesh in that it is a function of a combination of genetics and the personal ambition to develop the natural inclination. Many times, one's spiritual gift will overlap with one's talent.
16. The joy one derives from benefiting others in the function of one's spiritual gift inspires further function, i.e. momentum.
17. Some important distinctions should be made between "the gift", "the gifts", and "the gifted":
  - a. The "gift" is the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).
  - b. The "gifted" are gifted men and women given by Christ as victor in the Angelic Conflict to the Church (Eph. 4:7-12). Note that Paul's theme of unity in diversity is maintained in Ephesians (Eph. 4:4-6). Also, note that Christ's gift of **gifted men and women** in Ephesians is different from the **gifts of the Holy Spirit** given by the Holy Spirit.

It is better to think that Paul was not quoting one particular verse of the psalm but rather that he was summarizing all of Psalm 68, which has many words similar to those in Psalm 68:18. The essence of the psalm is that a military victor has the right to give gifts to those

who are identified with him. Christ, having captivated sinful people by redeeming them, is Victor and gives them as gifts to the church. Whereas Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12 speak of gifts given to believers, Ephesians 4:7 speaks more of gifted believers given to the church

A distinction may be observed in the New Testament between spiritual gifts and gifted men. While the two ideas are inseparable, spiritual gifts has reference to the supernatural powers possessed by individuals, while gifted men has reference to the sovereign placing of gifted men in the church for the purpose of ministering to the body. While the principal thought of 1 Corinthians 12-14 is that of spiritual gifts, we find reference to the bestowal of gifted men on the church in Ephesians 4:11. The two ideas are not strictly separated as indicated by the references in the Corinthian passage to both spiritual gifts and to gifted men.

- c. The “gifts” are the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The primary passage in the New Testament on this subject is 1 Corinthians 12-14. However, other passages also name some (if not all of the spiritual gifts).
- d. Other gifts are mentioned in the Bible, some of which are spiritual and some of which are not. Nevertheless, the source is God. For instance:
  - Justification (Rom. 5:15-16)
  - Eternal Life (Rom. 6:23)
  - Marriage (1 Cor. 7:7)
  - Blessings from God as a result of prayer (2 Cor. 1:11)
  - Paul desires to impart a spiritual gift to the Romans (Rom. 1:11)
- 18. The “baptism of the Holy Spirit” (i.e. the gift of the Holy Spirit) and the “gifts of the Holy Spirit” must be distinguished. The Charismatic interpretation of the baptism of the Spirit as an experience subsequent to conversion distorts the true biblical perspective of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. There are eight different baptisms spoken of in the Bible. Two of these eight involve the believer and the Holy Spirit.

<u>Agent</u>	<u>Person Baptized</u>	<u>Medium (“Into” or “With”)</u>	<u>Passage</u>
Jesus	Believer	Holy Spirit	Matt. 3:11; Lu. 3:16
Holy Spirit	Believer	Jesus Christ	1 Cor. 12:13; Rom. 6:3

We will discuss the issue of the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” in greater depth when we discuss the subject of tongues.

## **Passages Which Document the Various Spiritual Gifts**

### **1 Corinthians 12:8-10**

Word of wisdom

Word of knowledge

Faith

Gifts of Healing

Effecting of miracles

Prophecy

Distinguishing of spirits

Kinds of tongues  
 Interpretation of tongues

### **1 Corinthians 12:28-30**

Apostles  
 Prophets  
 Teachers  
 Miracles  
 Gifts of Healings  
 Helps  
 Administrations (Governments)  
 Kinds of Tongues  
 Interpretations

### **Ephesians 4:11**

Apostles  
 Prophet  
 Evangelist  
 Pastor and Teacher

### **Romans 12:6-8**

Prophecy  
 Service (Ministry)  
 Teacher  
 Exhortation  
 Giving  
 Leading (Ruling)  
 Mercy

### **Consolidated List (20 Gifts of the Holy Spirit)**

Pastor - Teacher (Eph. 4:11)  
 Teacher (Rom. 12:7; 1 Cor. 12:28-30)  
 Exhortation (Rom. 12:8)  
 Giving (Rom. 12:8)  
 Mercy (Rom. 12:8)  
 Administration (Governments) (1 Cor. 12:28)  
 Tongues (1 Cor. 12:8-10, 28)  
 Prophet (Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:8-10; 28-30; Eph. 4:11)  
 Evangelist (Rom. 4:11)  
 Apostle (1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11)  
 Interpretation of Tongues (1 Cor. 12:8-10, 29-30)  
 Helps (1 Cor. 12:28)  
 Healings (1 Cor. 12:8-10, 28 - 30)  
 Miracles (1 Cor. 12:8-10, 28-30)  
 Word of Wisdom (1 Cor. 12:8-10)  
 Word of Knowledge (1 Cor. 12:8 - 10)

Faith (1 Cor. 12:8-10)  
 Discerning of spirits (1 Cor. 12:8-10)  
 Ruling (Rom. 12:8)  
 Ministry (Rom. 12:7)

## Temporary Gifts Permanent Verses

In order for us to properly understand and execute the purpose of God in the present dispensation known as the Church Age, we must distinguish between those gifts which were temporary and those which are permanent. Otherwise, we will be distracted from the proper execution of the spiritual life in this Age of the Holy Spirit. Apart from a correct dispensational hermeneutic in one's approach to this subject, one will falsely conclude that certain temporary gifts are to be sought and executed in one's life today. We will examine the dispensational issue pertinent to each gift as we study that particular gift. First, I will list those gifts which I believe to be temporary and those I believe to be permanent. I will support this distinction later as we explore each gift.

<u>Temporary</u>	<u>Permanent</u>
Apostle	Pastor-Teacher
Prophet	Evangelist
Word of Wisdom	Teacher
Word of Knowledge	Helps
Discerning of spirits	Mercy
Faith	Giving
Healings	Exhortation
Miracles	Governments
Tongues	Ruling
Interpretation of Tongues	Ministry

## 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 prophesy 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.

### ***The Greater Context and Purpose of the Gift of Tongues***

In order to understand the greater context and purpose of the gift of tongues, one must understand the following key Biblical concepts:

- God's Covenantal Relationship with the Jewish Race (and Nation Israel) Expressed in Five Covenants:
- Abrahamic (Genesis 12:1-3; 13:14-17; 15:4-21; 17:1-8; and 22:17-18)
- Palestinian (Genesis 12:7; 13:15; 17:7-8; Deuteronomy 28-30)
- Mosaic (Exodus 20:1-31:18)
- Davidic (2 Samuel 7:8-16; 22:51; Psa. 89:20-37)
- New (Jeremiah 31:31-34)
- Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2:30ff which details the Times of the Gentiles in regard to Gentile rulership over the Jews until the Theocratic Kingdom with Christ as Head is established upon the earth at Christ's 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent. This is clarified and confirmed in such New Testament passages as Romans 11:25. Once the nation entered into the times of the Gentiles, no Davidic descendant sat upon the throne of David. Further evidence of this truth is found in Acts 1:6 where the disciples asked if Jesus was to then restore His Kingdom on earth after His death and resurrection.
- Jesus' offer of the Kingdom and the rejection by Israel during His first advent.
- The concept of the Five Cycles of Discipline found in Leviticus 26:14-46. (See SLR 7 – Addendum #1)
- The relationship between Acts 2 and certain Old Testament passages, i.e. Isa. 28:11 and Joel 2:28-32

*Non-technical Uses:*

There are no examples of “non-technical” uses of tongues that would provide the basis for any confusion with the “gift of tongues” in the Bible such as might be the case with other spiritual gifts, e.g. prophecy.

*Post Canon Distortions of the Gift:*

It is apparent from 1 Corinthians that speaking with tongues by its very nature is liable for abuse. Some points in this regard could be beneficial to anyone encountering a tongues speaker today.

- Speaking in tongues was considered by Paul to be the least of all spiritual gifts. The prominence given to it by sects is non-Scriptural.
- It was never a test of salvation. Not all Christians possessed the gift, even in Apostolic times. The total lack of reference outside of Acts and 1 Corinthians implies that it was nonessential. If tongues were essential even as an outward sign of salvation, then it is inconceivable that it should not be given a prominent place in the plan of salvation. It is significant that neither the gospel of John nor Romans mentions it.
- Tongues were not an indication of spirituality. Of all the churches to whom Paul wrote, the Corinthian church manifested the most carnality and gross sin, yet speaking in tongues was more evident here than in the other churches.  
It is a matter of history that the tongues movement has not led in holiness of living, but rather has been guilty of all manner of excesses. Many godly men and women through the centuries have been entirely aloof from any experience of speaking in tongues.
- The baptism of the Spirit and speaking in tongues are separate phenomena. Every Christian is baptized by the Spirit per 1 Cor. 12:13; however, not all Christians had the gift of tongues.

**10. Interpretation of Tongues:** See the preceding discussion of the gift of Tongues for the purpose and use of this companion gift.

## Permanent Gifts

### **1. Pastor-Teacher**

Definition: the believer possessing the gift of pastor-teacher not only teaches a group of believers, but he leads, provides, protects, and cares for his “flock”.

Greek: in Ephesians 4:11, the Greek word for pastor is *poimenas* which literally means “shepherd.” The hyphenated description of the pastor as “pastor-teacher” in Ephesians 4:11 emphasize the close connection between teaching and pastoral work. “The uniting of these two groups by one article sets them apart from the other gifted leaders. Absolute distinction, then, is probably not in view.” “Eph. 4:11 seems to affirm that all pastors were to be teachers, though not all teachers were to be pastors.”

Take note:

- Quite apart from being merely an organizer, promoter, or social leader, the true pastor gives himself to preaching the Word.
- The person with the gift of pastor-teacher has the desire to lead others in a correct understanding of the Word and provide direction in spiritual growth. Concurrent with these desires is a mutually compatible desire to insure that the believers under his charge are not misled by false teaching.

Distortions of the Gift:

- The idea that the pastor-teacher has authority over the life of any believer is false. Each believer is a royal priest accountable to God.
- The pastor-teacher’s authority extends only to matters pertaining to the conduct of the local church service, teaching content, and local church administrative matters. Just because a believer with the gift of pastor-teacher possesses such authority does not mean that everything he says is correct. This is the reason the Bereans were complemented on their searching the Scriptures to test the things they were taught.
- A believer with the spiritual gift of pastor-teacher will abuse his authority to the extent he is not filled with the character of Christ by means of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18).
- Believers are encouraged to recognize this authority and submit to it in Hebrews 13:7 and 17. Such exhortations imply that the pastor-teacher is setting the example in faith and conduct (see v. 7). The believer is under no obligation to submit to the authority of a pastor who is not setting such an example.

- Some say that it is not the man, but the message. I say it is the man and the message. The man being spiritually mature, trained and skillful in the Word of God.
- If the believer is to ever grow to spiritual maturity, he must humble himself under legitimate authority. He must also be objective. Objectivity requires that the believer distinguish between aberration and pattern in regard to behavior. He must not allow the cynicism which accompanies years of observing the injustices of life (apart from a trusting and abiding relationship with the Lord) to cause him to succumb to the arrogance of iconoclasm. This is the arrogant attitude that causes rejection of authority once an aberration (as opposed to a consistent pattern) has been detected in someone's life.
- There is no spiritual gift of "preacher." A "preacher" is any believer who witnesses. Therefore, both male and female can "preach."
- The believer with the gift of "pastor-teacher" is not "called." "Calling" implies some type of special ministry of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life whereby that believer hears a voice.

***Some Comments Regarding the Office of "Elder" and "Deacon" and the Gift of Pastor-Teacher:***

- In his Epistles Paul generally mentions elders in the plural (Phil. 1:1; Titus 1:5), but in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 the elder is spoken of in the singular while a plurality of deacons is mentioned in the same passage (cf. 1 Tim. 3:8). This might possibly indicate that as time went on a single elder led each assembly with the help of several deacons.
- The origin of deacons is not as clear as that of elders. Probably they were a distinctly Christian development, being at first helpers of the elders by performing duties which did not involve superintendence. The general sense of the word deacon as servant is found in the latest of Paul's Epistles (Col. 1:17; 1 Tim. 4:6), while in the same groups of epistles the specific official sense of the word is also found (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8-10). The qualifications for deacons (1 Tim. 3:8-10) indicate that they performed a spiritual ministry, so that one would conclude that the distinction between elders and deacons was not that the former performed the spiritual ministry while the latter concerned themselves with material things (Acts 11:30). Rather the distinction was that the deacons constituted the subordinate office performing their duties under the general direction and oversight of the elders. They were the helpers of the elders.
- The qualifications of elders and overseers are the same in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.
- Elder and overseer are equated in Titus 1:5 and 7. The duties included teaching (1 Tim. 5:17), pastoring-shepherding (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2), guarding truth (Titus 1:9), and administration (Acts 11:30)
- If there is a distinction between the gift of pastor-teacher and the office of elder, then I believe that it is most likely that the office of elder may have been a temporary organizational element carried over from Judaism and brought into the organizational structure of the early church. If so, this would be consistent with the fact that so few men would have been immediately qualified to assume the full function of the gift of pastor-teacher once the apostles had established a local church in a city from the ranks of Jewish and Gentile converts.

Besides the lexical meaning there is a further connection between Paul's word "elder" and the Old Testament word. The office of elder in Israel was established before the Exodus. After the Exodus, God had Moses select 70 from among all the elders and He gave them



His Spirit, even as He had to Moses, so that they might share the burden of leadership with him (Num. 11:16-25). Thus elder in Israel became a spiritual office as well as being the traditional position of honor that it was among most ancient Near Eastern cultures. (Scripture refers to elders in Egypt, Moab, and Edom, as well as in Israel.)

Throughout the Old Testament they functioned as judges in civil as well as religious matters. They advised kings, counseled people in their towns, and at times were associated with the high priest. In the New Testament they were found (**primarily in opposition to Christ**) identified along with the priests, scribes, and the high priest (Matt. 16:21; 26:3).

As stated earlier, elders appeared in the church without any formal introduction, instruction on how they were to be selected, or qualifications being stated. There are two reasons for this: (a) since the church was Jewish, it was already familiar with the idea of elders and their qualifications; (b) elders were presumably appointed by apostles, prophets, or teachers instead of selected by congregations (Acts 14:21-23; Titus 1:5). We are not told how the local ministers had been appointed in Ephesus, but we see that they were appointed in Crete by apostolic men. There is no sign that congregations could elect their ministers.

- A plural form of “elder” is always associated with a singular form of the word “church” in the Scriptures, e.g. James 5:14 and Acts 20:17, 28. This observation would lend support to a plurality of elders in the local church if it is legitimate today.
- Must there always be a plurality of elders, bishops, or pastors – whatever they are called – in every local church if it is to be true to the New Testament pattern? I do not believe so. Though the term elder does appear consistently in the plural, there are strong reasons why plurality is not always demanded, even though many evangelicals insist this is the case. First, there were house churches rather than large public meeting places in New Testament times. Therefore the use of the plural need not mean that each and every church had a plurality of elders. It may be understood to refer to one elder for each of the house churches in the city. Second, there is an interesting switch from the singular bishop to the plural deacons (1 Tim. 3:1-2, 8). This change lends some support to the validity of having only one elder or bishop in some instances. Third, the “angel,” or messenger, in Revelation 2-3 most likely referred to the single elder of each of those churches.
- The major problem with the concept of a plurality of elders in terms of church governance today is the fact that the pastor-teacher should be ahead of his congregation in terms of spiritual growth and understanding. (Otherwise, how could he lead?) If this is so, then how can the pastor with greater spiritual insight effectively lead his congregation if he shares authority with others who because of spiritual immaturity do not share his vision for the church? Older (elder) doesn’t mean more spiritually mature.

## ***2. Evangelist***

Definition: The evangelist is the believer who is gifted with a supernatural ability to communicate the message of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

Greek: The Greek word *euangelistes* literally means “a messenger of good.” The word is used in Acts 21:8, Eph. 4:11, and 2 Tim. 4:5.

Take note:

- We must distinguish between the term “evangelist” and “evangelism”. “Evangelist” is the gift, whereas “evangelism” is the function of the gift.
- The message of the evangelist focuses upon Phase 1 and 3 of life, whereas the message of the Pastor and of the Teacher focuses upon Phase 2.
- An evangelist should be a member of a local church where he can be fed with spiritual truth that will lead him to spiritual maturity and the development of Christian character in his own life.
- Unbelievers are the target of the message of the evangelist.
- The evangelist can be a part of a church’s staff; however, he may work a secular job like anyone else.
- A New Testament example of an evangelist is Philip in Acts 6:5, 8:5, and 21:8. He was one of the seven chosen as a deacon and began evangelizing outside of Jerusalem as a result of the havoc caused by Paul in Jerusalem (Acts 8:4ff). This action resulted in what is sometimes termed the “Gentile Pentecost” in Samaria.
- No further note of Philip is made until years later in Acts 21:8, it is noted that Paul stayed at Philip’s home on his way to Jerusalem.
- Effective evangelism in “Third World” countries must be followed with effective pastoring and teaching to insure spiritual growth on the part of new converts.

Distortions of the Gift:

- An evangelist who is immature in the Christian faith can succumb to the temptation to focus his efforts upon the believers in the local church who are spiritually stagnating. This is the responsibility of the Holy Spirit and the pastor-teacher.
- The pastor-teacher is not an evangelist; however, as is true of every other believer, the pastor-teacher has the responsibility to evangelize.
- The method used by the evangelist should not be restricted to mass evangelism. In Philip’s life evangelism encompassed a city (Samaria) on one occasion and it was directed toward one individual on another occasion (Acts 8:26ff).
- I believe that the effectiveness of the evangelist at any given time in history is directly proportional to the amount of pressure God is allowing to be placed upon a group of people. In Philip and Paul’s day, the external pressure was immense considering Roman and Jewish religious persecution of those of the Christian faith. Today in “Third World” countries, evangelistic efforts are much more effective than in countries that are becoming “Westernized.” Prosperity leads to contentment with the status quo.

### **3. Teacher**

Definition: The gift of teaching involves the God-given ability to communicate divine truth from Scripture to individuals so as to promote comprehension of spiritual truth and prompt decisions to yield to truth in believer’s lives Greek: The Greek words used for this gift are *didaskalia* and *didaskalos* in Romans 12:7 and 1 Corinthians 12:28.

Take Note:

- A supernaturally wrought superior knowledge is not the issue in the proper function of this gift. Every believer can be taught by the Spirit (John 16:13; 1 John 2:20, 27).
- The teacher must have a desire to see others grow to spiritual maturity and he/she must be motivated from Christian character to diligently study.
- The gift can be used either inside or outside the local church in such environments as Sunday school, nursing homes, retirement centers, home Bible studies, prisons, jails, campuses, camps, businesses, organizations, etc.
- The function of the gift of teaching can be focused towards certain groups depending upon the teacher's preparation for the specific challenges presented by that group. Examples would include divorcees, older people, immigrants, child abuse victims, new converts, teenagers, etc.
- It is my opinion that the gift of teacher should be exercised under the authority of the pastor teacher in those instances in which the members of the pastor's local church are affected. This is designed to insure that the teacher is not communicating views which conflict with those taught by the pastor. This would only lead to confusion of the flock.
- The function of the gift of teacher is very important to the local church for it is not possible for the pastor to structure his teaching in a way that will address the special needs of any one group of people in the local church at a given time.

#### **4. Helps**

Definition: This gift refers to one who aids or assists and is found in 1 Corinthians 12:28. This gift is the special enablement that God gives some members of the Body of Christ to invest the talents, skills, abilities they have to assist and/or support the life and ministry of other members of the Body, thus enabling the person helped to increase the effectiveness of his or her spiritual gift.

Greek: The Greek word is *antilempheis* which refers to the rendering of assistance and 1 Corinthians 12:28 is the only place in which the spiritual gift of helps is referenced in the New Testament. The root verb is *antilambano* and is used of helping the physically weak and infirm in Acts 20:35. In Philippians 4:15, *lempheos* is used with reference to financial assistance.

#### Take Note:

- Unfortunately, most people view this gift as a consolation prize when in fact it is essential to the proper function of the local church. This view is reflected in certain statements believers have made regarding this gift, e.g. "I don't know what gift I have, so I must have the gift of helps" or "If you can't do anything else, at least you can help."
- This gift is not restricted to those believers who are uneducated. Education has nothing to do with the possession of this gift. The gift of helps can be possessed by the physician who volunteers time on the mission field at home or abroad to make the work of the evangelist more effective? What about the artist who does sketches which attract crowds for the evangelist to evangelize? What about the pianist? The singer? What about the person who prepares overheads for the teacher?
- The person with this gift has no problem not being in the spotlight.
- Other tasks accomplished by the person with this gift might include:

Filing  
 Typing  
 Setting up auditorium  
 Accounting  
 Mailing  
 Tapes  
 Driving  
 Treasurer  
 Maintenance of building

## **5. Mercy**

Definition: The gift of mercy is that special ability to suffer alongside and sympathize with those who fall into grievous affliction.

Greek: In Romans 12:8, the participle *eleon* is used. Both *eleon* and the related *eleos* are common New Testament words for mercy. The core meaning of each of these words is related to the emotion that is aroused by coming into contact with someone else's affliction which engenders a response on the part of the one possessing the gift of mercy.

### Take note:

- The gift of mercy must be distinguished from the fruit of the Spirit.
- The person with the gift of mercy does not just simply react to emergencies; they seek opportunities to show mercy to those who are afflicted.
- The person with this gift will be able to show an attitude of joyfulness and cheerfulness even when dealing with the afflicted or those suffering adversity. The person with the gift is exhilarated over the opportunity to help the afflicted.
- Most often when the deeds of mercy are done, no one but the recipient knows anything about it. This is the reason that a person with this gift does not have to experience the limelight and approbation of others.
- The person with this gift functions well among the poor, the sick, the aged, the incarcerated, homosexuals, lesbians, prostitutes, deaf, blind, the slow of learning, transients, ghetto children, physically handicapped, orphans and widows.
- A person with the gift of mercy might wrongly conclude that he has the gift of evangelist. Such may not be the case.
- An immature reaction of the person with the gift of mercy is to conclude that since he feels this way about miserable people, every other believer ought to feel the same way. A person with the gift of mercy should not expect others to feel or act the same way as himself.

## **6. Giving**

Definition: The supernatural ability to cheerfully contribute one's material resources to the work of the Lord. It is the ability to give above and beyond that which is normally required of the believer.

Greek: The word in the Greek of Romans 12:8 comes from *metadidomi* which means to share or give a part of (as in one's material possessions).

- Since the giving is of one's personal possessions, the inculcation of sincerity of motive and purpose is most pertinent. Giving must not be with the ulterior motives which are most frequently associated with the act in worldly or "religious" circles.
- The attitude is more important than the amount.
- The gift is not just limited to money.
- The gift has the capacity to joyously give sacrificially.
- The person with this gift may have material possessions, but they don't possess him.
- The person with this gift does not desire to control others.
- There is no hypocrisy.

### ***Exhortation***

Definition: The ability to summon others to decision and action by inviting, appealing, urging, encouraging, imploring, requesting, and entreating.

Greek: The participle *parakalon* describes the person with the gift of exhortation in Romans 12:8. This verb and its two derived nouns are used approximately 140 times in the New Testament. The literal meaning is to call to one's side.

### Take note:

- The gift of exhortation is directed most frequently toward the edification of believers. For instance, consider the following examples where exhortation is documented even though the person in view in the passage did not necessarily possess the gift:

<u>Passage</u>	<u>Function</u>
Acts 11:23; 14:22; 15:32	Continue in the faith
2 Cor. 9:5	Give money
1 Thess. 2:11-12	Walk worthy of God
1 Thess. 5:14	Encourage the fainthearted
2 Thess. 3:12	Work
1 Tim. 2:1	Pray
1 Pet. 2:11	Abstain from fleshly lusts

- The function of this gift does not require an academic degree in psychology. Believers with this gift do not need to be licensed counselors.
- Believers with this gift have the ability to counsel in diverse situations. In so doing, the believer with this gift must be prepared to present options and consequences rather than explain what they might do in the situation. The issue is not what the person with the gift of exhortation might or might not do. Rather, the issue is what the options are for the counselee so that the counselee might choose based upon his/her level of spiritual growth. For instance, a mature believer should have the pertinent doctrine in the soul to equip him

to endure an unjust situation or to deal with a personal challenge in a different manner than the immature believer.

- The person with the gift of exhortation should be filled with a knowledge of Bible principles, promises, and doctrines combined with years of personal application so that he/she is able to relate these to the situation at hand.
- Examples of what the person with this gift might do:
  - encourage new believers to be consistent in learning Bible truth and incorporating spiritual disciplines like personal Bible study logs and prayer into their daily routine
  - encourage and comfort the ill and afflicted
  - counsel the perplexed
  - exhort the backslidden (reversionistic) believer

## **7. Ministry**

Definition: the supernatural ability oversees a service activity in a local church. This gift might be possessed by someone holding the office of deacon.

Greek: The gift of ministering appears in Romans 12:7, where the one who has the gift (*diakonian*) is exhorted to use it. The verb *diakoneo* means to serve, specifically indicating the personal service rendered to another in love.

### Take note:

- The “gift” of “Ministry” should be distinguished from ministry that is the result of every functioning gift. For instance, in 1 Cor. 12:5, all of the gifts are classified as *diakonion*.
- Deacons receive their name from the Greek word for servant (*diakonos*).
- The gift of ministry will not begin to function in a local church until ministries begin in a local church. A specific ministry may be initiated by a person with the gift of ministry OR a person with the gift of ministry may assume control of a ministry that has grown after being started by a person who does not have the gift of ministry.
- The gift of ministry focuses its effort upon the mental, emotional and physical needs of people, but it should never be separated from a redemptive or edifying purpose. It will always seek the salvation or spiritual recovery of its target group.
- Several types of ministry over which the gift of Ministry might function include:
  - A tent ministry
  - Prison
  - Poor
  - Aging
  - Handicapped
  - Coordinating different forms of evangelism efforts
  - Nursing homes
  - Retirement centers
  - Halfway houses
  - Working with immigrants
- The function of the gift of ministry might involve the coordination of the efforts of those possessing other spiritual gifts, e.g. the gift of helps and the gift of evangelist are

coordinated by the person with the gift of ministry to achieve maximum impact. Thus, the person with this gift is focused upon insuring that the proper resources are coordinated to achieve the intended result. The emphasis in this coordinating effort on the part of the one with the gift of ministry is that of service directed toward those possessing the other spiritual gifts and toward the intended beneficiaries of the ministry efforts.

## **8. Governments**

Definition: This gift relates to the ability to provide wise counsel and direction in the practical affairs of the church.

Greek: The word “government” is a translation of the Greek word *kuberneseis* in 1 Corinthians 12:28 and refers to the activity of steering or piloting a ship. It occurs only once in the New Testament, though the related noun *kubernetes* which designates the helmsman who steers the ship is used in Acts 27:11 and Revelation 18:17. In other non-Biblical literature, these words were figuratively used in ways related to other areas of life. The verb form has been applied to the management of a household and to a woman piloting herself and her child out of a time of crisis. It is used in the Septuagint to translate a Hebrew word that means to counsel or provide clever direction (e.g. Prov. 1:5; 11:14; 24:6).

Take note:

- While the New Testament does not comment specifically on the function of the gift (as is the case with most of the permanent spiritual gifts), one could conclude from the various ways in which the Greek word is used that it is an administrative gift wherein wise counsel and direction is given to groups of believers.
- This gift was extremely important during the formative years of the church when problems were present within and without. It remains strategically important and useful today, especially where outer persecution or internal strife is present. The importance of the helmsman increases in stormy times.
- The person with the gift of governments takes a need, assigns to it a project status, and seeks those who are gifted to work on the project.
- The person with this gift does not need to know how to do the work required to complete the project.
- The person with these gift just needs to know what work needs to be done and what gifts and talents can be used to complete the project. The person with this gift will only be satisfied with a satisfactorily completed job.
- This gift might be distinguished from the gift of ministry in that the person with the gift of governments is more tasks oriented in his ministry, whereas the person with the gift of ministry will be more long term oriented in his ministry.
- Examples of other gifts that might function in conjunction with the gift of governments include the gift of ruling and helps.

## **9. Ruling**

Definition: This is an administrative gift that focuses upon the specifics of a project. This gift might be possessed by the one holding the office of elder or possibly the office of deacon.

Greek: The participle *prohistamenos* is used to describe the person with this gift in Romans 12:8. The verb *prohistemi* literally means to stand before. It was used in extra-biblical writings to denote the superintendent of a guild, the head of a village, a guardian, and a landlord. In the New Testament the verb is used twice in the sense of maintaining good works (Titus 3:8, 14); three times in the sense of ruling one's own household (1 Tim. 3:4, 5, 12); and three times with reference to leadership functions in the church (1 Thess. 5:12; 1 Tim. 3:5; 5:17). The verb is used with the latter meaning in Romans 12:8, as supported by the context.

Take note:

- Some distinctions between the function of this gift and the gift of governments might include the following:
- The gift of governments does not need to know how to do the work to be performed, but needs only to know the person who knows how to do the work.
- The gift of ruling can both do the work and supervise others who can do the work with special attention given to the smallest of details, so that when the project is finished, it is completely and satisfactorily finished.
- The person with the gift of governments does not need to know anything about the details, but the person with the gift of ruling needs to know about every detail.
- The gift of governments focuses attention on people who can get the job done, while the gift of ruling focuses upon the detailed correctness of every facet of work being accomplished by whoever is doing the work.
- The Bible not only addresses this gift, but also addresses the attitude of other believers toward those with this gift and other leadership gifts (specifically the gift of pastor). For instance, in 1 Thessalonians 5:12, believers are exhorted to respect and appreciate their spiritual leaders who labor among them and who admonish them. Such activities could give rise to jealousy and resentment. See also Hebrews 13:7, 17.
- Whenever the gift is used, it is to be done with diligence per Romans 12:8. This means with prompt efficiency, no delay, no excuses, and no dilatoriness. Mediocrity in leadership can usually be traced to inefficiency and laziness. The primary emphasis in all administrative gifts is not so much upon the authority associated with the gift but the attitude of caring.