

## Gifts of the Spirit<sup>1</sup>

The gifts of the Spirit were primarily: words of wisdom, words of knowledge, gifts of healing, miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, tongues, and interpretation of tongues. Yes, it is true that in Paul's early ministry all these gifts were in operation and were practiced. As we have seen before, it took approximately thirty years for Paul to receive all the divine revelations from our Lord and write all his epistles.

Acts 26:16: **“But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;”**

II Corinthians 12:1: **“It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.”**

In I Corinthians 13:8-10 we read:

**“Charity never faileth: but whether *there be* prophecies, they shall fail; whether *there be* tongues, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.”**

During those years the Holy Spirit was supplementing the lack of the total revelation being revealed to Paul by the use of the gifts of the Spirit. As the last verse above states, **“when that which is perfect (Gr, *teleios*: complete)<sup>2</sup> is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.”** It makes sense that when God was through inspiring the Scriptures to be written, there would no longer be a need to have more parts coming with the gifts of the Spirit. There is evidence that these gifts were already being withdrawn before the end of Paul's ministry.

II Corinthians 4:16: **“For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward *man* is renewed day by day.”**

II Corinthians 5:2: **“For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:”**

II Corinthians 12:7-10: **“And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take**

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<sup>1</sup> By: Frederick E. Lewis – <http://www.biblicaladvancedbasics.com>

<sup>2</sup>Some would take this as meaning that when Christ returns in the *rapture*, the gifts will be done away. Neither the Greek word for *perfect*, which is neuter, nor the sentence structure supports this idea. We would have found "when He who is perfect" rather than "when that which is perfect."

**pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."**

**I Timothy 5:23: "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities."**

**II Timothy 4:20: "Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick."**

There was a time when Paul could send out handkerchiefs or aprons and the recipients could be healed.

**Acts 19:11,12: "And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them."**

After explaining to the Corinthians that the gifts were temporary, Paul had this to say:

**I Corinthians 13:11-13: "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth (Gr, *meno*: remain) faith, hope, charity, (Gr, *agape*: love) these three; but the greatest of these *is* charity."**

Today, there are entire denominations trying to bring back the gifts of the Spirit. These are, for the most part, sincere brothers and sisters in Christ who need to ask themselves some sobering questions: If the Holy Spirit is not behind these gifts today, just who or what is behind their manifestation? Do you think it would be beneath the Evil One to try to counterfeit these gifts to confuse the church today? Would it be more profitable to concentrate all efforts on those gifts that abideth (remain) in the power of the Holy Spirit, namely; faith, hope, and love? In the former kingdom program Peter reported that believers received the gift of the Holy Spirit after they repented and were water baptized.

**Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."**

In the present *mystery* program Paul reports that we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, the moment we believe, and are baptized into (identified with) the body of Christ by the Spirit.

**I Corinthians 12:13: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we *be* Jews or Gentiles, whether we *be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."**

**Romans 8:11: "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."**

I Corinthians 3:16: **“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and *that* the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?”**

II Timothy 1:14: **“That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.”**

Today, we have corporate ministry gifts for the body of Christ and personal ministry gifts for the members of that body.

Ephesians 4:11,12: **“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:”** It should be noted that there are no more apostles or prophets, now that the word of God is complete.

Romans 12:6-8: **“Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, *let us prophesy* according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, *let us wait on our* ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, *let him do it with simplicity*; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.”** It should be noted that the gift of prophesying is gone from the scene, now that the word of God is complete.