

**ALL  
ABOUT THE  
GIFTS  
OF THE**



**SPIRIT**

by Gordon Lindsay

# **All About the Gifts of the Spirit**

*by  
Gordon Lindsay*

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## **Chapter I**

# **Are the Gifts of the Spirit for the Church Today?**

Few subjects in the New Testament are as important as that of the gifts of the Spirit. Paul, in the 12th chapter of I Corinthians, reveals the Church as the Body of Christ. (I Cor. 12:27) He goes on to explain that the members of this Body are believers exercising varying gifts, even as the members of the human body have different functions and purposes. Paul adds, that all these members working harmoniously together, become the mystical Body of Christ on earth. In the light of this, it follows, that without the gifts of the Spirit, the Church becomes something quite different from that which God intended. Instead of being a supernatural organism, the Church is then only another human organization.

It is a matter of history, that within a short time after the Apostolic period, the gifts of the Spirit gradually began to disappear from the Church. Many reasons have been advanced as to why this happened. A common explanation is that when the New Testament canon was completed, these gifts were no longer needed.

But as the well-known writer, Donald Gee, points out in his excellent book, "Concerning Spiritual Gifts", there is no evidence in the New Testament to support any such view. He writes:

Such an argument rests upon a complete misconception of the true nature and purpose of the Gifts of the Spirit. It assumes that in the early Church, utterances through these gifts had all the authority of the Scriptures, but the New Testament utterly disproves such an idea. The early Church is consistently found always appealing to the Scriptures of the Old Testament (never to their own 'prophets' be it noted), for support for all

doctrine and final settlement in every dispute. Acts 2:16; 15:15; 26:22. The 'prophecy of Scripture' provided (2 Peter 1:20) a totally different level of authority to the spiritual gifts among them, and it does so still.

Although the manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit ceased to a great extent after the Apostolic Age, there is no evidence whatever that this occurred because the Lord withdrew the gifts. They ceased because the Church became lukewarm. The beginnings of this lukewarmness can be seen in the Lord's warning to the Church at Ephesus, when He gave the Revelation to St. John about the year 96 A.D. (Prophetic students fairly well agree that this Church symbolizes the Apostolic period of Church history.)

**Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. (Rev. 2:4-5)**

During the period of the great persecutions of the second and third centuries, the gifts of the Spirit continued to be more or less manifest. But shortly after Constantine's Edict making Christianity the national religion, at which time the Church came into Imperial favor, the ministry of the gifts rapidly declined.

However, it is important to note that the operation of the gifts of the Spirit never altogether ceased. The story of St. Francis contains thrilling incidents of miracles of healing. When he sent his preachers out, he gave them the same command that Jesus gave His disciples in Matt. 10:8. They were to preach that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand and to **"heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils"**.

The history of the persecuted sects of the Waldenses and Albigenses, shows that the gifts of the Spirit were in manifestation even during the Middle Ages. John Wesley, in the 18th Century, records in his journals remarkable Pentecostal phenomena in the meetings of the early Methodists. The



Moravians and other contemporary groups experienced many unusual supernatural manifestations. So, while the operation of the gifts greatly diminished during the ensuing centuries of the Church Age, they never did entirely disappear. And when at last, men began to earnestly pray for their restoration to the Church, the present latter-day outpouring of the Spirit resulted.

## **Were the Gifts to Cease?**

There is a passage of Scripture that has been commonly used as a proof-text by those who hold the position that the gifts of the Spirit have ceased from the Church. This is I Cor. 13:8-10:

**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.**

Here we are told that prophecies, and tongues, and knowledge shall cease, or pass away. *Just one glance at the Scripture shows however, that the period referred to is not this age at all, but the perfect age which is yet to come!* Even an unlearned person knows quite well that **“that which is perfect”**, has not yet come.

## **The Signs Were to Follow**

As we shall presently note, the Lord, in His Great Commission gave the promise of miraculous signs which would follow and confirm the preaching of the word. (Mark 16:15-18) These signs were to be the means of convincing the heathen of the genuineness of the gospel message. There was no hint that the terms of the Great Commission were to be changed in any way. In fact, Jesus implied that all generations to come, even to the end of the age, were to observe **“all things whatsoever I have commanded you”**.

**Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them**

**in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. (Matt. 28:19-20)**

The above are the very last words written by the Apostle Matthew. Who will deny that this Great Commission is not still in effect?

The need of supernatural signs to arrest the attention of the masses is illustrated in Elijah's challenge on Mt. Carmel, at the time he confronted the prophets of Baal. Elijah asked the people the question, **"How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him ... the people answered him not a word."** (I Ki. 18:21) But when the fire fell miraculously from heaven in answer to Elijah's prayer, the people fell on their faces and cried, **"The Lord he is God, the Lord he is God."** (Verse 39)

## **Is the World Evangelized Yet?**

The assumption by some that the world is now evangelized, and therefore the signs are no longer needed, is so obviously far removed from the truth that it needs no refutation. The facts simply are that the population of the heathen nations is multiplying at such a fantastic rate that unless the dissemination of the Gospel is speeded by some means, the fulfillment of the Great Commission can never be accomplished. So far, the only successful means of mass evangelism that ever has been demonstrated is that of the ministry of healing and miracles. We would be the last to criticize any sincere effort to reach the heathen, such as the use of medical missionaries and the building of schools and hospitals. Such means however, are entirely too slow, if we are to reach the heathen in our generation. In view of the fearful increase of the destructiveness of war, he who predicts that the Church will have more time to evangelize, than the period of this generation, is indeed optimistic.

Shall we not face the truth? The real reason for which the

gifts of the Spirit are missing from the Church is because the Church has been satisfied without them. The Church needs to realize that she is the Body of Christ, and without the gifts of the Spirit manifest in her midst, she can never fulfill her destiny. As Paul admonished Timothy to stir up the gift that was in him, so we today need to awaken the Church to the fact that Christ has set certain gifts in His Body, and we do well to put them into action.

## **Return of the Gifts Have Been Anticipated**

It is interesting to note that discerning Bible scholars of the 19th Century, realizing that the disappearance of the gifts of the Spirit from the main body of the Church, was due to her lethargy and lukewarmness, looked forward to, and even predicted a last-day outpouring of the Spirit and with it a reappearance of the gifts.

Michael Baxter, founder of the *Christian Herald*, writing in the year 1866, in his famous book *Baxter's Forty Wonders*—many of whose predictions have been startlingly fulfilled—has this to say concerning the reappearance of the supernatural in the Church:

Increased faith to work miracles ... and unparalleled boldness in preaching the gospel, will characterize the coming Pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit—the various gifts of the Spirit were bestowed upon pastors, prophets, evangelists, teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, and the gathering and completing of a perfect Church. But this end is not yet attained, therefore these gifts cannot altogether have ceased, or been entirely withdrawn, although they have been suspended and temporarily withdrawn as mark of displeasure for the apostatizing of the church from her first love.

At the turn of this century, Michael Baxter's prediction came true. The great Pentecostal outpouring, beginning in America, spread out over the world, and with it a new manifestation of the gifts. Some of those who were most used in this outpouring, however, saw a greater move of the supernatural

yet to come. In the book, *New Zealand's Greatest Revival* by Roberts, a brother remarked to Smith Wigglesworth, "One is tempted to envy you when you have had such great success." He received the following reply:

'Young man, it is the other way around. I feel like envying you. I have had three visions—three only. The first two have already come to pass, but the third is yet to be fulfilled. I will most likely pass on to my reward, but you are a young man and will most likely be in what I saw.' He burst out, 'O, it was amazing.' He was asked what was amazing. 'O,' he said, 'I cannot tell God's secrets. But you remember what I say—this revival we have had is nothing to what God is yet going to do.' The one to whom Brother Wigglesworth addressed these words commented: 'It was quite evident that the evangelist had a special vision granted him of the coming outpouring of the Spirit in an unprecedented effusion in the days just before our Lord comes to snatch away the Church.'

Dr. Charles S. Price, noted evangelist, said in a sermon he preached shortly before his death:

Yesterday we sang, 'Showers of Blessing', but now we are waiting for the deluge! It is coming and nothing can stop it. Like every previous outpouring, this glorious experience which is about to burst upon the world will not be the product of any established system. Established systems may experience it and enjoy it and flow along in the clear stream of its beautiful, onward flowing. Even then they may not do it as systems, but only as the multiplied thousands within their borders, who are hungry for God and are spiritually conscious of the fact that there is more to follow.

You have thought, have you not, that you have been in some glorious healing service? Perhaps you have and for them we praise the Lord. But wait a little while. I declare unto you that God is going to do better in your tomorrows than He has ever done in the past.

## **Fear of the Devil's Power**

One circumstance that holds back some in seeking the gifts

*Are the Gifts of the Spirit for the Church Today?*

of the Spirit is an almost morbid fear of the devil. They see demon-power and delusion everywhere. Of course, we know that there are many deceiving spirits in the land. However, the Scriptures give us means to test the spirits and discern which is not from God (I John 4:1-3) Moreover, one of the gifts is the discerning of spirits a gift designed to detect the presence of evil powers.

Those who fear that if they sought the gifts of the Spirit, they might receive something from the devil, should remember Christ's words in Luke 11:11-13:

**If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?**

Here, Jesus points out that if earthly fathers give good gifts unto their children, certainly the Heavenly Father will not do worse by His children!

It is significant to note also, the incident that followed this statement of Christ. It involved His healing of a dumb man. After the man was healed, opposers charged the miracle was performed by the power of Beelzebub. But Jesus pointed out that if Satan cast out Satan, then his kingdom was divided and would not stand.

**If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub. And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges. But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you. (Luke 11:18-20)**

What is the conclusion of the matter? Surely, on the basis of Christ's words, we need not fear to press forward and claim this ministry. Fear kept the children of Israel from going forward and

possessing the land that had been given them. The ten spies cautioned them to play it safe, that the inhabitants of the land were giants, and that the risks and hazards were too great. Because of their fear, that generation never entered into the land of promise. They were doomed to wander and die in the wilderness. God grant that we shall not repeat their foolish error.

## Chapter II

# Purpose of the Gifts of the Spirit

Having shown that the gifts of the Spirit are still in the Church, and that they are manifested wherever faith is, we shall consider something of their purpose and what God intended that they should accomplish. The gifts of the Spirit are not toys; they are God's love-gifts to the Church. Any attempt therefore, to use them for selfish or frivolous purposes, would be a tragic mistake.

What then were the purposes that God had in mind when He ordained these special gifts of the Spirit to be bestowed upon the Church? As we shall see, the paramount purpose was that through the operation of these gifts, the Church should become the functioning Body of Christ on earth.

### *1. To manifest the Body of Christ on earth.*

In the 12th chapter of I Corinthians, Paul considers the Church as the Body of Christ.

**For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. 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. For the body is not one member, but many ... Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. (I Cor. 12: 12-14, 27)**

Here is a vital truth which is not as fully understood as it should be. Here we are told that the Church is the Body of Christ, and each of us are members in particular. The point is this, that as long as Christ was on earth, He could only be in one location at a time. He could only minister to a few at a time. However, after the Spirit was poured out, it became possible for Him to manifest Himself through an unlimited number of

believers. These members of His mystical Body could go forth into all parts of the world and minister to the people, even as He ministered when He was on earth. **“As he is, so are ye in the world.”** So was the ministry of Christ multiplied many-fold.

Thus, by means of these supernatural gifts, Christ, through the Holy Spirit, may manifest Himself and His ministry in any part of the earth. The Church thus becomes indeed the Body of Christ, doing His works, and ministering His love and compassion to the needy. In a real way the Church is His eyes, His ears, His feet, His hands, to carry on His work on earth.

This truth also shows us, that when the Church loses the manifestation of her gifts, she becomes weak, ineffective, and something altogether different from what God intended.

## *2. To assist in the Evangelization of the World.*

In Mark 16:15-18, the Lord gives the Great Commission as a command to believers for the evangelization of the world.

**And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.**

How was this evangelization to be done? Not through the use of gimmicks or gadgets, but through certain miraculous signs which are manifest through the gifts of the Spirit.

It has not been easy to evangelize the heathen. William Carey, the first missionary of modern times, toiled six years to win a single convert. The evangelization of the nations has been a slow and tedious process. Missionaries have labored all their lives to win a few souls. Contrast this with the results of the great mass revivals conducted by those with sign-gift ministries.

## **Sign-Gifts Among the Mohammedans**



## *Purpose of the Gifts of the Spirit*

A few years ago one of our associates began a campaign in a Mohammedan country. Some ten thousand Moslems gathered to hear him speak. They were not really hostile, but neither were they convinced that Jesus is the Son of God, or that He is alive. They had been taught that He was a prophet such as Mohammed. The evangelist put a proposition to the people. If Christ were to heal the people before their eyes, giving sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and making the lame to walk, would they believe? They readily signified that they would. So, it came about that when these miracles actually began to take place, and the people saw them with their own eyes, that the vast audience of Moslems began to shout, "Jesus is alive, He is alive! Jesus is the Son of God! He heals our people."

One great purpose of the gifts of the Spirit is to give confirmation to the gospel.

### *3. To edify the Church.*

**But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort ... Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church ... How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. (I Cor. 14:3, 12, 26)**

A number of the gifts have a definite purpose in the edifying of the Body of Christ. The 14th chapter of 1 Corinthians, gives considerable instruction on the order of the apostolic service. For example, we are advised that if one is moved to give a message in the unknown tongue, he should ascertain whether there is an interpreter present. (Verses 5, 13) Several times in this chapter, Paul emphasizes that one of the great purposes of the gifts is for the edification of the Church. The gift especially adapted for the edification of believers is the gift of prophecy, and, the speaking in other tongues with interpretation. Of course, any gift manifested in the Assembly can result in blessing the believers.

*4. For the deliverance of God's people.*

As certain of the gifts are specially designed for the edification of the saints, so there are others ordained for their deliverance. The Old Testament is replete with occurrences in which the people of God received supernatural deliverances. The ministry of Christ was marked by miracles of supply, such as the turning of water into wine, the feeding of the five thousand, or miracles of deliverance, such as the calming of the sea.

The gifts specially designed for the deliverance of God's people in times of crisis, are the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, gifts of healing, working of miracles, and the gift of faith. In fact, almost all the gifts of the Spirit may serve at times to effect a supernatural deliverance for the people of God.

*5. For the perfecting of the Church.*

**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: Till we all come into the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. (Eph. 4:11-13)**

Closely associated with the edifying of the Church, is God's eternal purpose to perfect the Church. The gifts of the Spirit are manifest through chosen individuals, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, so that the Church may be perfected, that is, made ready for His Second Coming.

Even though people become devout Christians, there is always a possibility that they may be misled by some plausible but self-deceived leader, who happens to win their confidence. God's people need teaching, by God-anointed men, who can discern between the true and the false, as Paul shows in the 14th verse.

**That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the**

**sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive. (Eph. 4:14)**

## **Some General Facts About the Nine Gifts of the Spirit**

The nine gifts of the Spirit fall into three general classifications.

First, there are the revelation gifts;

1. Word of wisdom
2. Word of knowledge
3. Discerning of spirits

Second, there are the power gifts;

1. Faith
2. Gifts of healings
3. Working of miracles

Third, there are the inspiration gifts:

1. Prophecy
2. Divers kinds of tongues
3. Interpretation of tongues

## **Gifts Blend One With Another**

It must not be thought that the gifts of the Spirit are all sharply defined one from another. Actually, the working of the gifts in these three groups, tend to merge from one into another, as the spectrum of a rainbow. Thus, the word of knowledge and the discerning of spirits, are similar gifts. The supernatural knowledge obtained through the gift of discerning of spirits is really a specialized kind of knowledge. Again, gifts of healing are for the deliverance of the human body from sickness and disease. Yet, a miracle of healing, in which creative work is required, would seem to be classified more correctly under the

working of miracles. Certainly, the raising of the dead, and calling back of the human spirit to a dead body is beyond the scope of gifts of healing, yet, healing is involved. It is evident that the boundaries between the two gifts are not sharply defined.

Again, those familiar with Pentecostal meetings will observe as a frequent occurrence, that they who interpret, may move into the realm of the gift of prophecy. The two gifts are similar in operation except that with prophecy there is no speaking in the unknown tongue, as with the gift of interpretation.

Moreover, it is often true that two or more gifts operate together at a given time. The word of wisdom and the word of knowledge work closely together. Knowledge is the raw material, but we must have wisdom to know how to use it. In 11 Kings 6, we see as many as seven of the gifts in operation during one occasion!

## **Are the Gifts Under Control of the Believer?**

We believe that with possible rare exceptions the recipient of a gift, has complete control of his faculties. It is true that on occasions, a person while receiving the Baptism, or some special revelation, has been so lost in the Spirit that he may not be aware of what is going on about him. But during public ministry, the speaker, even while deep in the Spirit, in almost all cases, knows what he is doing and saying. If he chooses, he can cease speaking in tongues or prophesying. Of course, when the Spirit is upon him to do these things, he will obey the Lord, but nevertheless, what he is doing is under his control.

Paul bears this out when he says **“and the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.”** (1 Cor. 14:32) He instructs the Church to prophesy one by one, and to let everything be done by course, to avoid confusion. If there is no interpreter, let the one who speaks in the unknown tongue be silent. (1 Cor. 14:28) All these instructions indicate that the gifts are subject to the prophets. The Spirit does not force anyone to manifest a gift.

## **Chapter III**

# **Are Gifts of the Spirit Actually Imparted to Believers?**

Before we go further in the study of this fascinating subject, there is an important question to which we need to give careful consideration. The question is this: Are gifts of the Spirit actually imparted to believers? Do the individual members of the Body of Christ actually receive these gifts, or are they given to the Church as a body, and manifested by the Spirit through its various members by a sort of a rotation? There is a most important reason why we must know whether the Spirit of God directly imparts the gifts, or merely rotates them through the various members of the Body at times and seasons of His choosing.

### **The Three Possibilities**

There are three possibilities as to how this might be:

First, God could give the gifts to a person in the same sense as the individual might receive an outright legacy. The gift would be his to do with exactly as he pleased, with no accounting required. He would need no help from the deceased, or anyone else to take care of the bequest. Obviously, the gifts of the Spirit are not given on that basis.

Secondly, it might be that all initiative in manifesting the gifts lies in the Holy Spirit, with members of the Body of Christ passive instruments. A notable illustration of this is seen in the incident of Balaam's donkey, in which God spoke through a dumb beast. In this case, it is apparent that God manifested Himself through the animal, though obviously the latter did not receive any gift.

On the other hand, members of the Body of Christ not only

are instruments in the operation of the gifts, but unlike the dumb animal, the believer bears responsibilities for their proper manifestation. This the Scriptures plainly state.

That brings us to the third possibility, and the one that we believe is the Scriptural one: it is, that the believer is an actual recipient of a gift and as such is an active partner (not just a figurehead, nor a passive instrument as in the case of the donkey), in the manifestation of the gifts.

It is very important that this should be made clear. For if individuals get the impression that the gifts are entirely sovereign manifestations of the Spirit, apart from human responsibility and cooperation, it can lead to serious error. If they suppose that the responsibility for the operation of the gifts lies entirely with God, there is danger that they will confuse their own faulty actions with those of the Spirit. If, and when, such persons get out of order, they will resist instruction, claiming that the Spirit of God makes them do what they do.

Paul, of course, refuted this fallacy when he said, **“The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.”** (1 Cor. 14:32) The Apostle is not referring here to the Spirit of God, but to the spirit of the prophet. The operation of a gift is clearly in the hands of the prophet. Paul further explains that much depends on the prophet, for the manner in which the gift is manifested, for its timing, and for its proper exercise. (1 Cor. 14:23-32)

## **Do Individuals Receive Gifts to Do With as They Please?**

We may emphatically state however, that no one receives spiritual gifts in the sense that he may do with them as he pleases. Wrong as it would be to deny the believer's responsibility in the manifestation of the gifts, it would be still more serious to fail to emphasize the importance of the place of the Holy Spirit in their operation. A partnership exists between God and man, and the cooperation of both is indispensable.

*Are Gifts of the Spirit Actually Imparted to Believers?*

Believers receive gifts, yet only in the sense of stewardship, as is illustrated in the Parable of the Talents.

**For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. (Matt. 25: 14-15)**

The talents did not belong to the servants. They were stewards only. All of the talents, and the increase, were to be presented for accounting at the return of the Lord. One of the servants failed to use his talent and hid it in the earth. The fate of that evil servant, when the time of reckoning came, we all know. That wicked servant who had acted as if the talent were his to do with as he pleased, paid a terrible penalty for his disobedience.

It is extremely important that we have a balanced understanding of the basis on which gifts are given. They are not something to be “turned on or off” at the person’s will. Nor are they to be used for personal benefit nor gain. The gifts are given by the Spirit to qualify a person for a special service in the Body. As Paul declares:

**Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. (I Cor. 12:27-28)**

One person is set in the Church in a prominent position, as pastor or teacher. To another is given the position of “helps”, a ministry which may include many things. Romans 12:8 speaks even of giving, as one of the “helps”. God may bless a certain man above others with miracles of finance so that he is enabled to help the Church financially in a special way. Another member, God will use in a different way.

Now while no one receives gifts of the Spirit to use as he pleases, nevertheless, the Scriptures plainly teach that a gift is

given in such a way that we can say that one person has it and another does not—that the gifts do reside within the believer, and are to be manifested on a partnership basis with God. Since God will always do His part, it remains for the believer to do his.

It is important for every spirit-filled believer to realize that God wants him to have at least one manifestation of the Spirit, and that he is responsible to see that it is exercised. For all of us must stand before the judgment seat of Christ to give an account of our stewardship.

Now let us consider the Scriptural evidence which shows that gifts of the Spirit are actually imparted to believers:

## **1. The Gifts of the Spirit Are Both Gifts and Manifestations.**

Are the “spirituals” that Paul speaks of, gifts of the Spirit, or are they manifestations? They are both. As we study I Cor. 12:4-11, we see that these nine spirituals are called “gifts” and manifestations” both. **“But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.”** (Verse 7) We are thus informed that every man should have at least one of the manifestations. But they are also called gifts, as the 4th verse plainly says:

**Now there are diversities of gifts but the same spirit. (I Cor. 12:4)**

This statement does not refer to I Cor. 12:28 at the end of the chapter. Paul in these 4th to 7th verses is plainly giving an introduction to the nine gifts, that he enumerates in the 8th to 10th verses. Now if Paul speaks of these manifestations as “gifts”, it is also in order for us to do so. They are called both “gifts” and “manifestations”.

## **2. We Are to Covet Earnestly the Best Gifts.**

Does the Holy Spirit give gifts to believers?

Here we are told, particularly, **“to covet earnestly the best**



**gifts**". Is Paul referring to the gifts of the Spirit, or to the ministry-gifts of verse 28? Well, the ministry-gifts include apostles and prophets. Surely Paul does not mean that the members of the Church are all to covet the offices of apostleship and prophet! The verses which follow, show that Paul *is* referring to the gifts of the Spirit, for he mentions several of them: the speaking in tongues, prophecy, the word of knowledge, faith, and miracles.

Notice the peculiar verb which is used—"covet". The word "covet" speaks strongly of desiring possession of something. The tenth commandment warns against coveting or seeking possession of that which belongs to another. Notwithstanding, the coveting of God's best gifts, Paul encourages!

### **3. Some Receive Gifts of Healing.**

**Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers?  
are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing?  
do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? But covet  
earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more  
excellent way. (I Cor. 12:29-30)**

Is more proof needed than this that the manifestations of the Spirit are gifts of the Spirit, than to note that Paul actually speaks of one of these as "*gifts of healing*"? "Gifts of healing" is a gift of the Spirit. It is by virtue of having this gift, that one qualifies for the office of "gifts of healing". "Have all gifts of healing?" Paul asks. Obviously all do not have them, but conversely, some do. In other words, gifts of healing are made available to the Church, although they are given only to certain members. Some have gifts of healing, others do not. Thus the conclusion is inevitable, that believers have gifts of the Spirit.

### **4. The Spirit Divides Severally as He Will.**

**But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every  
man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the  
word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the  
same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to**

**another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues. (I Cor. 12:7-10)**

We have noted that Paul says, **“There are diversities of gifts.”** (Verse 4). In the seventh verse, we are told that the manifestation of these gifts is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge, etc....

After listing these nine manifestations of the gifts, he then adds, **“But all these worketh the one and selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.”** (Verse 11) Notice that Paul devotes the whole balance of the chapter to explaining that through the operation of these gifts each member of the Body of Christ (which he likens to the members of the human body) has a special function of its own. By virtue of this function, the man himself, through his office, becomes a gift to the Church. God sets him in the Body to fulfill a certain purpose. (Verses 28-30)

It seems logical that God should give certain gifts to individuals who by nature and temperament are best fitted for those gifts, rather than rotating them indiscriminately through all members of the Body. Observation confirms that this is what happens. Yet it is true, that only God knows what is in the heart of man. Some that we would not suppose would be qualified for a certain ministry, will receive it. God reserves the right to manifest His gifts through anyone, at anytime, and on any occasion that He deems fit. Neither Samuel nor Jesse thought David was the one to receive the anointing, but God gave it to him anyway.

## **5. Spiritual Gifts Are Imparted.**

**For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established. (Rom. 1:11)**

The Apostle Paul, in writing to the saints at Rome, is filled

with solicitude for the spiritual growth of Christians in that city. He declares that he has them much on his heart, and he hopes God will permit him to visit them. For what reason? That he might impart **“unto them some spiritual gift”**. Did Paul mean that the spiritual gift to be imparted was only to the Church as a whole and not to the individual? Paul’s epistle to the Romans considers not only the Church’s possessing gifts, but also her individual members. He points out that believers have *“gifts differing according to grace that is given us, whether prophecy ...”* Let us read the entire passage of Romans 12:4-7:

**For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. 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.**

## **6. Gifts Can Be Misused.**

Careful consideration of the subject shows that the individual is a full partner in the manifestations of the gifts. As such, he has a certain responsibility in their operation. Otherwise, if it is wholly the initiative of the Spirit, it would be impossible for a gift to be misused.

For whatever the Holy Spirit does by Himself, He does perfectly and well. Yet, the evidence of the Scriptures is overwhelming that it is possible that gifts can be misused.

When Moses smote the Rock twice in the wilderness, he erred in not sanctifying the Lord before the children of Israel. (Nu. 20:11-12) Notwithstanding, the water flowed out of the Rock anyway. Moses’ faith caused the miracle to take place, even though he had misused his gift by not sanctifying the Lord in the eyes of Israel when performing the miracle.

In another instance, the disciples of the Lord would have brought fire down out of heaven upon the heads of the people in a village of Samaria, if Christ had not restrained them. (Luke

9:51-55)

Paul makes it very clear that the speaking in other tongues can be misused by being exercised at the wrong time. (I Cor. 14:23) Prophets are to manifest their gift in the Assembly in proper order, and under certain circumstances to restrain it. (I Cor. 14:29-32)

We all know that it is possible to misuse the gifts of God. This being true, it is evident that there is a joint responsibility of both God and man in their manifestation.

## **Chapter IV**

# **How the Gifts of the Spirit Are Received**

David was the youngest of Jesse's sons. Neither Jesse nor Samuel supposed that the Lord would choose David to be the king. Jesse had not even bothered to call him in from the herding of his sheep, at the time the choice was to be made. (I Sam. 16:11)

The twelve apostles were all chosen from among men of lowly and humble position. Not one was taken from the ranks of the scholars who had been trained and schooled in Judaism.

It is evident that the Spirit of God does not impart His blessings indiscriminately. He is wisdom personified, and nothing takes place at random nor by accident. In the impartation of the ministry-gifts, He takes into consideration the person's temperament and general make-up. One person may have natural talents that lend themselves to evangelism. Yet, he may also have hidden tendencies that may lead to self-exaltation or ruinous conceit. As one writer puts it:

It seems that in some cases the Spirit's distribution of gifts is determined in a measure by the makeup and inherited characteristics of the individual person. Usually, He imparts such gifts as the person can most readily lend himself to. The natural orator is anointed to become a preacher and the one with an analytical mind becomes a teacher. The one for whom it is more natural to have great faith receives the gift of healing, and such as have a combination of a strong willpower, great faith and a fiery nature, become endued with power to the working of miracles or the casting out of demons. Others who are very susceptible to spiritual influences, are endued with the gift of discernment of spirits.

Now, let us consider some of the elements and conditions

that enter into the impartation of the gifts of the Spirit.

*1. Receive the Holy Spirit.*

It is self-evident that if the gifts are of the Spirit, we must needs have the Holy Spirit for their proper manifestation. While it is true that every saved person has the Spirit, and may even have some operation of the Spirit in his life, the full Baptism of the Spirit is necessary to a normal working of the gifts.

However, it is apparent that the apostles exercised gifts of healing, and perhaps some working of miracles, before the day of Pentecost. Indeed, they were commanded to **“heal the sick, cleanse the leper, raise the dead, and cast out devils.”** (Matt. 10:8) Yet, we know that the Baptism of the Holy Ghost is a most important factor in the full manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit. The early Pentecostal writer, we have just quoted, makes the following interesting and instructive remarks as to what degree one who does not have the Baptism of the Holy Spirit can manifest the gifts of the Spirit:

Some of the gifts of the Spirit, such as healing the sick, discernment of spirits, casting out of demons, and the anointing to preach and teach the word, producing prophecy in its first forms, can be possessed in a measure before the full baptism occurs. While others, such as speaking with tongues and the interpretation thereof, the deeper phases of prophecy and discernment of spirits, the working of miracles and the casting out of the more powerful demons, cannot be possessed before the full baptism has taken place.

Some may question why this is. As all saints have some measure of the Spirit, this measure manifests itself in some way and the degree of this manifestation is directly determined by the degree in which the Holy Spirit has control over the individual. If the person has but partly yielded, He has but a partial or fractional control over him and therefore His operations are but partial or fractional; that is, there will be a mixture in the manifestation or operation, part Holy Spirit, and part the flesh and mind of the individual. Healings of the sick can take place under such conditions, also a small measure of discernment, likewise the casting out of the less powerful demons, and the ordinary preaching of the word under a partial

anointing. But the deeper and more powerful manifestations cannot, because their successful operation is independent of the ordinary workings of the mind. In fact, in order to come forth in clearness and purity, the will and mind of the person, for that particular time and moment, must be completely so subject to and under the control of the Holy Spirit, that His wish and will are in no way interfered with. The mind, unless in that condition of complete submissiveness to the Spirit of God, will interfere and effectually prevent the operation and manifestation of the Spirit. So certain of these gifts and manifestations cannot take place unless the baptism has occurred, not because the experience has made the person any more worthy, but because the experience has prepared him in such a way that the Spirit can more successfully operate through him and upon him.”

2. ***“Covet earnestly the best gifts.” (I Cor. 12:31)***

Since the Holy Spirit is the Giver of the gifts and that prerogative belongs to Him, it is thought by some that there is little that we can do about it—that we must wait patiently for God to move in His own good time and His own way. This is a very inadequate view of the matter, and has encouraged the Church in times past into lethargy and lukewarmness. By the same reasoning, certain theologians have argued that whereas the new birth is a supernatural work, the sinner must await the Lord’s time for him to be saved. Others have taught that since healing is a work of God, we must leave the matter entirely in His hands, and wait until He is ready to heal. This putting of all the responsibility on God may sound fine, but the Scriptures plainly teach that man has also a very definite responsibility. God always fulfills His part, if we are faithful in doing ours.

Therefore, although the **“dividing severally”** of the gifts is the Spirit’s prerogative, Paul, nevertheless, urges us to **“covet earnestly the best gifts”**. We must have a deep desire for them; indeed, there is need of heart preparation on the believer’s part, if he is to properly exercise the gifts he receives. Even as a child asks gifts of its father, so Jesus tells us that God’s gifts are given to those who ask for them. (Matt. 7:11) As an illustration of this, Paul admonishes that those who speak in tongues in the

assembly should pray that they may interpret. **“Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret.”** (I Cor. 14:13)

Another example of a man’s earnestly desiring a certain gift or ministry is found in the story of Elijah and Elisha. Elisha followed after the prophet, refusing to accept anything less than a double portion of the Spirit that Elijah possessed. Elijah pointed out that Elisha had asked a difficult thing. He knew full well that God’s best is not given lightly. Elisha, however, passed every test, and after the translation, the sons of the prophets observed, **“The spirit of Elijah doth rest upon Elisha.”** (II Kgs. 2:15) *Observe also that the gifts followed the giving of the ministry!*

What are the “best gifts” that the believer should covet? We would not attempt to decide the order of their value. Indeed, the gifts of the Spirit, operating through members of the Church are compared to the members of the human body; each has its vital purpose.

The loss of a little finger can cause severe suffering. Paul tells us that we are not to say to the weaker members, **“I have no need of you.”** (I Cor. 12:21) The “best gifts” for each member of the Body, are the gifts that the Spirit chooses to manifest through them. As each believer earnestly looks to the Lord, the Spirit will reveal the gifts that He has prepared for their ministry.

And while we are on the subject, we can say without fear of contradiction, that one of the “best gifts” is wisdom. This we need in the successful manifestation of all other gifts. James tells us that any of us may ask for, and receive wisdom.

**If any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. (James 1:5)**

Some may hold that James is not speaking of the gift of the word of wisdom, but verse 17 indicates that he is speaking of gifts.



3. *Dedication to God.*

He who manifests gifts of the Spirit, bears a definite responsibility of holy living. Since he has in his hands special tools for wreaking severe damage upon the kingdom of Satan, he thereby becomes a special target for the attacks of the enemy. Satan seeks to intensify the temptations of anointed ministers, and at times only the most steadfast and continued resistance to the temptation brings victory. A good illustration of this is seen in Christ's spiritual conflict in the Garden of Gethsemane. (Heb. 5:7; Luke 22:44) The gifts of the Spirit bring the recipient into realms of warfare in the heavenlies. A let-down in the prayer-life can involve one of the gravest of dangers.

We have only to turn to the examples of men like Balaam, Saul, Samson, and Judas, to understand what is meant by these warnings. Each of those men were given unusual ministries. Yet, none were adequately prepared for the responsibilities they undertook, and as a result their earthly careers closed in tragedy and disaster.

Thus, we see that one of the important preparations for receiving the gifts of the Spirit is a complete surrender and consecration to God. This ministry requires the services of fully dedicated men. There must be a complete committal to God, so that come what may, there will be no faltering, no turning back. The consecration must be as final as that of the three Hebrew children, who for their faith were cast into the fiery furnace.

**If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up. (Dan. 3:17-18)**

4. *The laying on of hands.*

Paul said, **"Lay hands suddenly on no man."** (I Tim. 5:22) This must include reference to the laying on of hands for the gifts of the Spirit. Simon, the sorcerer, wanted power so that on **"whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost."**

(Acts 8:19) Peter's rebuke settled the question for all time about the matter of laying hands, indiscriminately, on people.

Nevertheless, it is true that gift-ministries may be imparted through the laying on of hands. Paul told the Romans that it was his deep desire to visit Rome that he might **"impart unto you some spiritual gift"**. (Rom. 1:11) Certainly, the Spirit of God may lead God-anointed ministers to lay hands upon certain persons for the receiving of a gift-ministry. This was evidently true in the case of Paul's laying hands on Timothy.

**When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also. Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. (II Tim. 1:5-6)**

**Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. (I Tim. 4:14)**

Clearly, the direct guidance of the Spirit of God is all-important in this matter of laying on of hands. It appears that Paul and the presbyters did not lay hands on Timothy to give him some predetermined ministry. Rather it was the Spirit that spoke by means of a prophecy and told them what his ministry would be. Over zealous persons can, by their well-meant but unscriptural actions, do things that are out of order, and lead to expectations that can never be fulfilled. Paul laid hands upon Timothy, but he knew all about him, about his mother, and even his grandmother. It is not a little significant that Paul refers to the young man's background in connection with the laying on of hands on Timothy. Moses laid hands on Joshua that he might receive the spirit of wisdom. (Deut. 34:9) But he did so, after he had known Joshua for a long time—after he had thoroughly proved himself.

## Chapter V

# Can the Gifts of the Spirit Be Counterfeited?

Can the gifts of God be counterfeited? The correct answer to this question is extremely important. For many people take for granted that every manifestation that resembles the operation of the gifts of the Spirit, must be genuine. Yet, John the Apostle, straightly warns us that we are to try the spirits, for not every spirit is of God.

**Beloved, believe, not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. (1 Jn. 4:1-3)**

Jesus, Himself, warned that as the days of the Great Tribulation draw near, there will be false prophets arising, showing great signs and wonders.

**For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. (Matt. 24:24)**

The Book of Revelation shows that at that time, spirits of devils will go forth showing forth miracles and deceiving the whole world. (Rev. 16:14)

In view of these warnings, there can be no doubt that the gifts of the Spirit can be imitated with the result that some, perhaps many, will be led astray. Just as the voice of the serpent

deceived Eve at the beginning, even so Satan through his false prophets, continues to the present day, to allure many into paths of deception and error. Yet, there is no real excuse that these delusions should ensnare people. The Scriptures provide full information on how we can discern between the true and the false. Those who apply themselves prayerfully to the study of the Word of God, will never fall victim to these deceptions.

## **The Magicians and Moses**

Perhaps the most striking illustration of the ability of Satan to imitate the work of God, is provided in the story of Moses. God had given the prophet authority, to execute judgment upon the land of Egypt. The Lord gave Moses the sign of the rod and the serpent. When Moses cast the rod upon the ground, it became a serpent. (Exod. 4:3) This was the sign that Moses and Aaron were to demonstrate before Pharaoh, when he asked proof of their authority. (Exod. 7:9)

Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, did as the Lord had commanded, and the rod turned into a serpent. (Verse 10) But the magicians cast their rods down also and lo, they also became serpents! (Verses 11-12) How then was it possible to tell which miracle was of God and which was of the devil? Notice what happened. *Aaron's rod swallowed up the magicians' rods!*

Spiritualists and sorcerers today, are able to perform many mystifying acts, including even materialization and dematerialization. Sorcery is the art of producing false miracles such as materialization and dematerialization. Such however, pertain not to the gifts of the Spirit. Elijah and Elisha created oil, but the *oil did not dematerialize; it remained to bless*. Oil that dematerializes, smacks of sorcery. Divine power swallowed up the magicians' serpents. Sorcery may imitate a creative miracle, but its miracles are illusionary and not real. Satan does not possess true, creative powers.

The magicians, with their sorceries, kept on trying. Aaron took his rod and stretched it out over the waters of Egypt and, they became blood. (Exod. 7:19-21) The magicians tried their

enchantments. They could not counteract the plague, but they were able to imitate what had been done.

Pharaoh hardened his heart and would not repent, so another judgment came on him—the plague of frogs. (Exod. 8:5-6) Once again the magicians were able, by their enchantments, to imitate what Moses and Aaron had done. But the sorcerers were nearing the end of their resources. The next plague was the plague of lice. Here the magicians failed in their attempts to imitate the miracles of Moses.

**And the magicians did so with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not: so there were lice upon man, and upon beast. Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as the Lord had said. (Exod. 8:18-19)**

The magicians now recognized that the judgments were the finger of God. The perverse, self-willed Pharaoh, however, stubbornly refused to repent or change his course.

What do these signs the magicians produced, teach us? They reveal that Satan has a certain degree of power. He can imitate some of the gifts of God. Therefore, we must be alert to Satan's deceptions. Nevertheless, there is a definite limit to what Satan is able to do. He is in no sense all-powerful. He can go only so far.

## **Human Failure and Evil Spirits**

Can the men who have this supernatural ministry fail God? People are prone to suppose that a man, as long as he is manifesting a gift, can do no wrong. Some seem to go so far as to suppose that he is practically infallible. Though we should extend honor to the office, this is no excuse for us to shut our eyes and surrender our powers of discrimination to the point at which we cannot recognize wrong when it exists. A man, ministering the gifts of the Spirit, is just as accountable to God and man as anyone else.

Here is something that should be understood. Because a man goes wrong, does not mean that the gift of God will no longer be manifested through him. In fact, we are told that **“the gifts and callings of God are without repentance”**. (Rom. 11:29) This is something that is hard for people to understand. They suppose, if a man goes wrong, that the Spirit of God will at once cease manifesting Himself in his life. In time yes, but not necessarily immediately. A man with a sign-gift ministry, may actually have fallen into a state of disobedience to God and still continue his ministry—for a time. This is clearly portrayed in the life of Saul, who not only was king of Israel, but also was given a prophet’s ministry.

**And the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man. And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them. (I Sam. 10:6, 10)**

Unfortunately, Saul was an unstable character. Self-will, envy, and a violent temper marked an erratic temperament. Eventually, the Spirit of the Lord departed from him and an evil spirit took control. The servants of Saul apparently discerned what had happened and took measures for his deliverance. David, upon whom the Spirit of the Lord had come, was brought into Saul’s house, and during his ministry with the harp, the evil spirit left Saul.

**But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him. And Saul’s servants said unto him, Behold now, an evil spirit from God troubleth thee. Let our lord now command thy servants, which are before thee, to seek out a man, who is a cunning player on an harp: and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well. And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him. (I Sam. 16:14-16,23)**

### *Can the Gifts of the Spirit Be Counterfeited?*

Nevertheless, it came to pass that after David had slain Goliath, a spirit of jealousy rankled in Saul's heart, and opened the door to the return of the evil spirit.

**And it came to pass on the morrow, that the evil spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of the house: and David played with his hand, as at other times: and there was a javelin in Saul's hand. (I Sam. 18:10)**

Saul under the influence of this demon, became actually murderous. He now sought to kill David. (Verses 11-12) From that time on, evil preponderated in the life of Saul. (I Sam. 19:9)

### **Gifts of the Spirit and Godly Living**

It is often assumed that any person in whom a gift of the Spirit is manifest, must be living a holy life. Certainly, one so chosen, bears a great responsibility before the Lord to live a holy and separated life. Unfortunately, there are some who manifest genuine gifts, who afterwards fall into sin, and in so doing, bring confusion into the house of God. As to the possibility of such things happening, we need look no further than the case of David, the sweet psalmist of Israel, a man in whom the prophetic gifts were manifest in a marked way, and whose Psalms have provided inspiration to millions of people.

Yet, this inspired writer, became guilty of the most flagrant conduct. He committed adultery with Bathsheba, and to cover up his deed, was a conspirator in the death of her husband. God forgave David, because he became deeply repentant for his sin. But the consequences of his act were beyond calculation. First, it brought reproach upon the cause of the Lord. (II Sam. 12:14) Second, for the balance of his life, David paid the penalty for his misdeed. Treachery and betrayal occurred in his own household. David continued to manifest the ministry of a prophet (see Psalms 51), but he paid a fearful price for his indiscretions.

### **Balaam**

Balaam was an hireling prophet, but he was not a false prophet. Some of his prophecies are among the most beautiful in the Scriptures. Consider his prophecy of Christ:

**I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth. (Num. 24:17)**

Balaam's besetting sin was his love of money. God forbade him to go with Balak, the Moabite king, who wanted him to curse the children of Israel. (Num. 22:12) Yet, because Balak promised him riches and honor, he sought the Lord again for permission to go his way. But it brought Balaam neither riches nor honor. The prophet retained his position as a seer, but his ministry degenerated into sooth-saying and divination.

**Balaam also the son of Beor, the soothsayer, did the children of Israel slay with the sword among them that were slain by them. (Joshua 13:22)**

Was it the Spirit of God, or a deceiving spirit, that was responsible for the soothsaying of Balaam? Divination, according to Acts 16:16, is the work of familiar spirits. As in the case of King Saul, the Spirit of God evidently forsook Balaam and an evil spirit took its place.

## **Samson**

Samson was one of the Judges of Israel. His birth was foretold by an angel. God ordained him to be a Nazarite. Early in his life, the Spirit of God began to move upon Samson at his home in the camp of Dan. (Jud. 13:25; 14:6) Samson's great supernatural strength enabled him to confound and put to flight Israel's enemies, the Philistines. His colorful exploits are a familiar story to all Bible readers.

But he had one fatal weakness. Samson continually ignored his Nazarite vow of separation. He visited a harlot one night at Gaza. Yet, the gift of God did not immediately fail him. At



midnight he carried off the gates of the city to the top of a hill before Hebron. (Jud. 16:1-3) It might seem to the casual observer, that his immoral conduct was being winked at by the Lord. But God does not always collect His accounts the day evil is committed. Samson, morally weakened by his consorting with harlots, now dallied with the treacherous Delilah. As a result of her seductions, Samson permitted his hair to be shorn. Then suddenly, his strength left him. Having deliberately played with fire, he became a victim of his folly. His eyes were put out, he had to grind in shame in the prison-house of the Philistines. Alas, the Lord had departed from him!

**And she said, the Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the Lord was departed from him. But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house. (Judges 16:20-21)**

Yet, the gift had not altogether departed. He was to perform one more great exploit. When at last his hair had grown out again, and he was brought before the Philistines to make sport, the Lord in answer to his prayer, allowed him to collapse the pillars of the Philistine temple, bringing death to about 3,000 men and women. (Jud. 16:27, 30)

## **Judas Iscariot**

Judas Iscariot is a solemn example of a man who manifests genuine gifts of the Spirit, and yet totally fails God. He was one of the twelve apostles whom Jesus sent forth to heal the sick and to perform miracles, even to the raising of the dead. (Matt. 10:1-8) While we have no record of any particular miracle that he performed, it is evident that all the twelve had success in this ministry. Likewise the Seventy, who were sent forth at a later time, returned to testify that even devils were subject to them. (Luke 10:17-20) There is no record that all the others succeeded while Judas failed. In fact, he must have achieved a certain

prominence, since he was elected treasurer of the group. (John 12:4-6) None of the disciples apparently had the slightest suspicion that Judas was the one that would betray Christ. When Jesus revealed that one of them should betray Him, everyone of them, including Judas asked, **“Lord is it I?”** (Matt. 26:22,25)

Acts 1:17 declares that Judas had obtained and shared the ministry that the other disciples had. Peter says, **“For he was numbered with us, and had obtained a *part of this ministry.*”** Yet, he betrayed Christ, and after a fruitless repentance, went out and committed suicide. Certainly, these Bible examples show that the gifts of the Spirit are not meant to be infallible proofs that man is living a life that is pleasing in the sight of God. They also show that a man may continue on his own momentum for a season, but if he persists in his course of self-will, his own evil will destroy him. If he repents in time, God will forgive him, although like David, he may be unable to avoid the consequences of his wrong doing.

Jesus taught that a man’s character is not to be judged by the gifts, but by the fruits. He added that at the day of judgment, many will say that they prophesied, that they possessed gifts of healing, or even the working of miracles, and will offer this as proof that they are true believers. Yet, they will be judged as workers of iniquity!

**Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, will enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. (Matt. 7:21-23)**

What then is the true test of those who are genuine followers of Christ? The Lord does not leave us in doubt. The true test is in the fruits.

**Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall**

*Can the Gifts of the Spirit Be Counterfeited?*

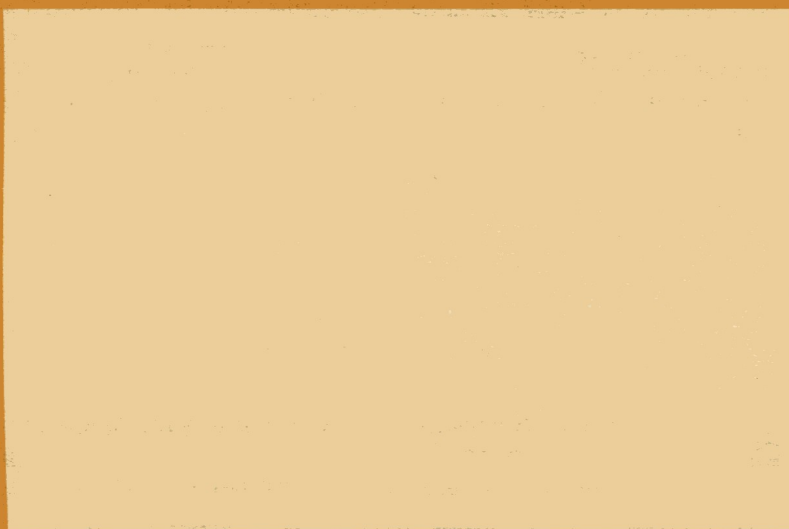
**know them by their fruits. (Matt. 7:15-17)**

The implication is clear. Even though a man may demonstrate unusual gifts, he is not to be followed unless he also manifests the fruits.

## *DO YOU NEED HELP . . .*

- In seeking a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ?
- In understanding the teachings of the Bible?
- In solving problems of your personal life which require guidance and counseling?

If so, contact the person named below. You may also obtain additional literature which will help in answering many of your questions on the great subjects of the Bible and their application to life today.



### **WINNING THE NATIONS CRUSADE**

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