

# Spiritual Gifts

## Part 3

*Sept. 11, 1994*

- **1 Corinthians 13:1-3**

We have learned a number of truths which are foundational to our understanding of Spiritual Gifts. Before we go any further, we must have these things firmly planted in our understanding:

- The presence of Spiritual gifts does not imply the presence of spirituality.
- The Holy Spirit distributes the gifts according to His will and purpose.
- We should not seek to all have the same gifts.
- All Spiritual gifts are for the edification of the body, *not* the individual believer.
- The revelatory gifts were used to testify to the validity of someone.
- The gifts are worthless if not administered in love.
- The revelatory gifts (prophecy, tongues, special knowledge) are temporary.

- **The Gift of Prophecy**

### **Old Testament Foundational Passages**

- **Exodus 4:1-17**

Here, in response to Moses' fear, God declares that Moses will be like God to Pharaoh and Aaron will be his prophet. Aaron's responsibility was to command Pharaoh to release the Israelites. It is interesting to compare Moses with Christ in that God said that He would only speak to Aaron through Moses and Moses gave Aaron the ability to speak the words of God. So too, Christ equipped the Apostles with the ability to speak the word of God.

- **Deuteronomy 5:22-31**

This is the record of Moses presenting the law of God for the second time which comes just prior to their conquest of Canaan. God had spoken to the people in such a way that the people were terrified nearly to death. They asked Moses to request of God that He no longer speak directly to them but rather through Moses; God concurred with their idea. Moses then became the consistent mouthpiece of God to the nation of Israel.

- **Deuteronomy 13:1-5**

Moses instructs the people that if someone who is able to prophesy or perform a miraculous sign comes to the people and entices them to follow strange gods, they were to ignore the words of that prophet and put him to death.

- **Deuteronomy 18:20-22**

Through Moses, God instructs the Israelites that anyone who claimed to be a prophet and who foretold something that did not come to pass was to be ignored. A true prophet of God would

always be correct and this correctness was a validation of the authenticity of the prophet. His job was not to foretell the future; he was the mouthpiece of God.

- **Deuteronomy 18:15-18**

This is a very familiar verse where God tells Moses that He will raise up for Israel a prophet like Moses. In Acts 3:22, Peter teaches that this promise was fulfilled in Christ. But this raises the questions; Were the prophets which succeeded Moses not like him? How is it that Moses was different?

- **Numbers 12:6-8**

Here we see that God declares that He speaks to the prophets in dreams and visions, but to Moses He speaks face to face. Jesus was this kind of prophet - in the order of Moses. We also see in Hebrews chapter 3 a comparison of Jesus with Moses. There we learn that Moses was a faithful *servant in the house of God* while Jesus was a *Son over the house of God*.

- **Joel 2:28-32**

Joel prophesies about the New Testament era of prophecy. He uses the same kind of language (dreams and visions) that God declared he would use to speak to the non-Moses type prophets. We know that this verse speaks of the new testament era because the verse is quoted and applied to the events of Pentecost by Peter in Acts 2:17-21.

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- **The Gift of Tongues**

#### **Four Foundational Principles of Tongues:**

- **New Testament tongues were foreign languages;**
- **New Testament tongues were a revelational gift;**
- **New Testament tongues were for the public edification of the church;**
- **New Testament tongues were a sign of judgment**

- **New Testament tongues were foreign languages;**

#### **Acts 2:1-13**

*1 When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.*

*2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.*

*3 Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them.*

*4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

*5 And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under*

heaven.

*6 And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language.*

*7 Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans?"*

*8 "And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?"*

*9 "Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,*

*10 "Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes,*

*11 "Cretans and Arabs -- we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God."*

*12 So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "Whatever could this mean?"*

*13 Others mocking said, "They are full of new wine." (NKJV)*

- When attempting to formulate doctrinal positions about the gift of tongues, passages like these should be relied on sparingly. The reason for this, is that you do not get doctrine from narrative, but rather from doctrinal instruction. But we can glean at least one thing from these passages; when the tongues came, they were all speaking known languages of surrounding nations. These languages had three primary features, as do all meaningful languages; grammar, vocabulary and syntax. The assertion that tongues is unintelligible babble is not supported in scripture and is even condemned by Christ, Matthew 6:7 (see Strong's #945).

- **New Testament tongues were a revelational gift;**

#### **1 Corinthians 14:1-5**

*1 Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.*

*2 For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries.*

*3 But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men.*

*4 He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church.*

*5 I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied; for he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification. (NKJV)*

- The reason why Paul says that they should especially desire prophesy is because it by its nature edifies the entire body. Paul reiterates this theme many times in these passages and it is crucial for proper understanding.
- Paul teaches that tongues with no interpretation are of no value to the body because no one understands him except God. The construction of the words implies that even the speaker does not know what he is

saying unless he has been given the gift of interpretation as well.

- Many have tried to use these verses as a defense for the modern-day prayer language. It is believed that this is the modern manifestation of the New Testament gift of tongues. The difficulty with this thinking is that in these verses Paul is not teaching in support of private tongues; he is requiring the public interpretation of them. He is specifically teaching against a gift to be used to edify only the individual. Also used is Romans 8:18-28. Note in these verses the use of the word groan; all creation groans for the redemption of man. Note also that these groans cannot be uttered.