

Are Spiritual Gifts for today?

Some people claim that all of the spiritual gifts listed in the Bible are not for the Church today. They believe some gifts, like prophecy, tongues, miracles, etc., were only for the early Church to know what God would have them do. These people say that after the Church was established and the New Testament written, some spiritual gifts were no longer needed. They often use I Corinthians 13:10 to explain their belief: *But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.* (I Corinthians 13:10) They say that when the perfect revelation of God's Word was written, there was no longer a need for tongues, interpretation, and prophecy. They say that once the Church was established there was no longer a need for confirming signs and miracles.

What they fail to note is that knowledge is also mentioned in the same passage as being "vanished" or done away with: *...whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.* (I Corinthians 13:8) If we use this verse to say tongues, interpretation, and prophecy are no longer needed, then we must also say knowledge is no longer needed. It would be foolish and unbiblical to claim God does not heal people, speak to people, and perform miraculous signs and wonders today.

This passage actually refers to a future time when the "perfect" Kingdom of God is established on earth. Since what is perfect has come, we will have no need of any of the spiritual gifts then, because... *He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.* (Rev 21:3) We will have no need of messages through prophecy, tongues, interpretation, for we will be dwelling with God who inspires such messages. We will have no need of the word of wisdom or knowledge, for we will be living with the source of knowledge. We will not need discerning of spirits, for...*there shall no wise enter into it any thing that defileth...but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.* (Rev 21:27) There will be no need for gifts of healing for. *In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life...for the healing of the nations.* (Revelation 22:2)

Also remember the purposes and objectives of spiritual gifts given in Ephesians 4:12-15. The purposes are for: Perfecting of the saints. Promoting the work of the ministry. Edifying Christ and the Church. The purposes for which the gifts were given still remain. The saints still need to be perfected in holiness and righteous, the ministry still needs to be promoted to the ends of the earth, and Christ and the Church need to be edified. The objectives are that we will: Be united in the faith. -Develop our knowledge of Christ. Develop in perfection, with Christ as our model. Become stable, not deceived by false doctrines. Mature spiritually in Christ. God would not give spiritual gifts for these purposes and objectives and then remove them without these things being accomplished.

Are all believers united in the faith? Has everyone developed fully in the knowledge of Christ? Are we all perfected? Are our church members stable and not being deceived by false doctrines? Are all our church members spiritually mature? The answer to all these questions is "no." These objectives have not been accomplished. For this reason we know all of the spiritual gifts are still for today. God gave spiritual gifts to accomplish certain purposes in the Church. He will not withdraw any of these gifts without these purposes being accomplished. The Bible also says that the *"gifts and callings of God are without repentance"* (Romans 11:29). This means God will not change His mind and take back a spiritual gift or calling He has given. Our God is a God of wonders (Psalm 136:3-4). As the Creator and Sustainer of all that is, God has the power to suspend natural laws in order to fulfill His purposes. Miracles were a part of the ministries of Moses, Elijah and Elisha, and of course Jesus and the apostles, (Hebrews 2:3-4)

Revelation 2:7 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Spiritual gifts are for church edification and glory of God and it should be used with love, compassion and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Otherwise, God will punish those who misuse it and if used for the purpose of personal gain (money) fame and competition. If a person does not walk the truth or teach the truth, we can discount any miracles he/she performs. Miracles performed by a false teacher are not from God. We can use to discern spirits whether a messenger and a message is from God. Miracles can be counterfeited. God's Word will always light the true path. In Matthew 24:24, Jesus warns, "For false christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect—if that were possible." Similarly, 2 Thessalonians 2:9 says, "The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders." When God sent Moses to deliver the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, He performed miraculous signs through Moses to prove that Moses was truly His messenger and confirming their message as being from God. However, Exodus 7:22 states, "But the Egyptian magicians did the same things by their secret arts. But the fact remains that Pharaoh's magicians were able to perform miracles. So, if miracles can be from either God or the demonic world.

But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Matthew 18:7 Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!