

The Sign Gifts of the Holy Spirit

INTRODUCTION

Gifts Of The Holy Spirit Defined

1. A gift, in the spiritual sense, means the Holy Spirit doing a particular service through the believer and at the same time, using the believer to do it.
2. Stated negatively –
 - a. It is not something the believer is doing by the aid of the Holy Spirit.
 - b. It is not the product of a natural gift, enhanced by the Holy Spirit.
3. 1 Cor 12:7 states that it is the manifestation of the Spirit.
4. The results coming from the exercise of the spiritual gift is an expression of the Spirit's ability rather than the result of the Holy Spirit making use of the "qualities" of the one through whom He works.
5. The fruit of the Spirit is inward and transforms the believer Gal 5:22-25; while the gifts are exercised by the Spirit and are outward in the areas of service.
6. Spiritual gifts result from spiritual birth while natural abilities are the result of natural birth.

Gifts Of The Holy Spirit Listed

Rom 12:4-8

Prophecy
Service
Teaching
Exhortation
Giving
Leading
Showing Mercy

1 Cor 12:4-11

Word of Wisdom
Word of Knowledge
Faith
Healing
Miracle working
Prophecy
Distinguishing of Spirits
Speaking in Tongues
Interpretation of Tongues

1 Pet 4:10-11

Speaking
Serving

Eph 4:7-11

Gifted men to the church
Leadership ministries of divine appointment
Apostles
Prophets
Evangelists
Pastor-Teachers



Every Christian has received a gift of the Holy Spirit.

1 Cor 12:7,11; Eph 4:7



They are given for the common good.

1 Cor 12:7



It is the Holy Spirit who gives them.

1 Cor 12:8-11

It is the position of this study that some of the gifts were specific to the New Testament Era, while God was in the process of forming the New Testament and dealing with the Jewish people.

They will be referred to as the “sign gifts” and are listed as follows:

1. the gift of apostleship
2. prophecy – foretelling versus forth telling, (which falls closer to teaching)
3. working of miracles
4. the gift of healing
5. speaking in tongues
6. the gift of interpreting tongues

The gift of discerning spirits is included by some, while not by others, depending on their interpretation of what the exercise of the gift entails. If it refers to discerning the source of prophecy being given and God is no longer adding to the Biblical Text, then the purpose for this gift is no longer there.

In beginning our study, several questions are asked in order to help compare the experience of the Present Day Church with that of the Apostolic era Church.

1. Where are the tongues of fire and the rushing of a mighty wind?
Acts 2:1-3
2. Where are the languages being spoken that are known dialects, spoken by the hearers?
Acts 2:4-13
3. Do missionaries blind their opponents?

Acts 13:6-12

4. Do church leaders discern hypocrisy and pronounce the immediate death of members of the church?

Acts 5:1-11

5. Do evangelists amaze an entire city with miracles?

Acts 8:5-8

6. Do evangelists get transported from place to place?

Acts 8:39-40

7. Are the multitudes healed by merely being in the shadow of the healer?

Acts 5:12, 15-16

8. Are there prophets giving specific prophecies which soon come to pass?

Acts 11:27-28

9. Are Christian witnesses being supernaturally set free?

Acts 5:17-26

The miracles and signs of the Apostolic age were clearly miraculous and even the opponents of the Gospel could not refute the miracles.

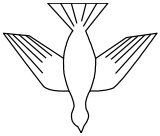
Acts 4:15-16; Acts 5:25-42

Any detailed comparison between the Apostolic age and the age we live in today shows an amazing lack of similarity in the exercising of the New Testament sign gifts.

The exercise of the spiritual gifts was not the product of believing in them at the beginning of the Church age.

1. Those at Pentecost were not expecting to speak as they did.
2. In Acts, no tongues speaker was previously aware of the existence of the gift; yet they spoke.

THE SIGN GIFTS

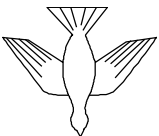


The Gift of Healing

Was a specific gift to an individual, enabling them to heal.
It is not to be confused with healing performed by God in answer to prayer.

1. The healings involved verifiable afflictions and handicaps such as the man crippled from birth.
Acts 3:1-10
2. The healings were instantaneous, complete, and obvious to all.
Acts 3:7; 4:16
3. The healings in the Apostolic age never failed, regardless of the faith of the recipient.
At times the one healed was unaware of the ability to be healed.
Acts 3:1-10
4. They did not depend on direct physical contact.
Acts 5:15
5. There were no preliminaries required.
6. The healings were usually in public, performed on unbelievers, and often, en masse!

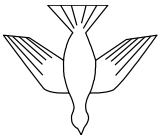
I am not aware of the above type of healing taking place in our present Day. Therefore, whatever is taking place today is not the same as that which took place in the Apostolic age.



Raising The Dead

Two cases are recorded in Acts 9:36-42 and Acts 20:7-12
This action was apparently rare, even for the Apostles.

Question: Would anyone have been convinced, by the miracles that we have reported today, that Jesus was the Son of God or that the Apostles represented God, if what was seen in the New Testament era was what we see today?



The Gift of Tongues

1. They were the ability to speak previously unlearned, foreign languages.
 - + There are only 3 occurrences described in Acts
 - a. Pentecost Acts 2:1-13
 - b. The Conversion of Cornelius Acts 10:44-48
Cornelius' experience was the same experience as that of Pentecost. Acts 11:17
 - c. Conversion of the Disciples of John Acts 19:1-7
Though not stated, I would expect their experience to have been similar to the first two.

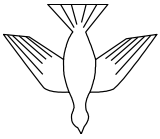
2. 1 Cor 14:21-22 tells us the Purpose for Tongues:
A sign to the unbelieving Jews.
 - + At Pentecost there were only Jews present.
 - + With the conversion of Cornelius (a Gentile), the sign benefited the Jews, causing them to conclude that God was including Gentiles in the Church.
 - + The disciples of John were Jewish.

3. Several observations can be made concerning the speaking of tongues in the New Testament:
 - + All three occurrences were done in public and not in private.
 - + All three occurrences involved people who were not previously aware that the gift existed and consequently

- were not seeking it.
- + There is no indication that any spoke tongues in a “spiritual state” or “trance”.
- + In all three occurrences, the benefit from the exercise of the gift was for someone other than the one speaking.
1 Cor 12:1-30; 1 Pet 4:10

4. The above would indicate that the present day phenomena is not the same as that which is described in the book of Acts.

NOTE: If Faith is required to participate in the modern day phenomena, it should be remembered that FAITH is trust in biblical evidence, rather than in personal experience.



Biblical Evidence That The Sign Gifts Were Temporary

1. The Bible neither says the sign gifts will continue, or that they will cease after the Apostolic Age.

2. It does record that:
 - a. The Apostles were the primary ones who performed them.
Acts 2:43; 5:12

 - b. That the performing of these signs was the sign that the individual was an Apostle.
2 Cor 12:12

 - c. That the need to “prove” one’s calling as an Apostle, a proof that involved how God worked through the individual in question Gal 2:7-10 was required by the New Testament Church.

 - d. Another requirement for a individual to be recognized as an Apostle was that they had seen the Risen Lord.
1 Cor 9:1-2; 1:22
Paul states that he was the last Apostle to have seen Jesus alive 1 Cor 15:8
These appearances were not “visions” but were actual Appearances!

 - e. Eph 2:20 states that the Apostles were used to build the foundation of the Church. If the present work being done with the Church is building upon that foundation then there is now no longer a need for those foundation builders.

- f. Rev 21:14 states that there are only 12 Apostles.
- g. Heb 2:2-4 speaks of the “sign gifts” in the past tense at the time the book of Hebrews was written.
- h. If the sign gifts authenticated the Apostolic ministry, and there are no Apostles at the present time, then there would be no sign gifts at the present time. i.e. When special revelation ceased, then the sign gifts ceased as well; they ceased with the close of the Biblical Canon.
- i. The Epistles do not indicate that the New Testament Church was characterized by power and miracles, it was characterized by the problems addressed in the Epistles and described in Rev 2 and 3.
- j. Mk 16:20 is not found in the better manuscripts.
Verse 20, if accepted, it refers to the Apostolic ministry.
- k. Jas 5:14 does not instruct the sick to seek a healer.

2 Tim 3:14-17 and 2:15 say we are to “study the Bible” for our direction in life, not seek a word of direct revelation from God.
- l. The purpose of the sign gifts was not to provide a prayer language. Acts 2:22
- m. There is no teaching in Scripture which connects the miraculous gifts, “sign gifts” with:

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| + the fruit of the Spirit | Gal 5:22-23 |
| + spiritual warfare | Eph 6:10-18 |
| + the life of faith | Eph 5:18-21; Col 3:2- |
- 17

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| + or requirements for church leaders | 1 Tim 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9 |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|
- n. Apart from the two witnesses, God and the angels perform the signs recorded in the book of Revelation, not men.

3. Moses & Joshua performed miracles, which did not continue after their

deaths. They were for a specific purpose for a specific time. Nor were other believers expected to do the same.

Elijah and Elisha also performed miracles. The general population never did and such miracles did not continue throughout Israel's history.

The prior pattern of God's dealing would argue that God's work through the Apostles need not continue.

4. Tongues-speaking and healing are not limited to Christianity.

Pharaoh's wise men were able to duplicate many of Moses' miracles.

Again, the Bible, not experience, must be our guide to truth!

5. Historically sign gifts ceased after the Apostolic age and have been non-existent for the past 1900 years.

The proof – from the Bible – of their starting up again should be the responsibility of those who participate in them and not those who don't.

6. The Apostolic teaching that accompanied the sign gifts of the New Testament Era have been lacking from the modern day experience. To my knowledge, no significant advance in Biblical or Theological Knowledge has occurred as a result of the exercise of modern day "miraculous gifts".

7. The Charismatic movement crosses all denominational lines. It is a movement that "fits" every form of "Christianity".

Does this make sense?

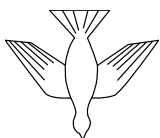
Are there to be no Biblical beliefs necessary to call a Church Christian?

Could it be that the Holy Spirit does not care what the participants of this movement believe?

An extensive look at 1 Corinthians, chapters 12 to 14 is to follow.

THE SIGN GIFTS – PART 2

1 Corinthians Chapters 12 through 14



CHAPTER 12

Verses 1 – 3 Concerning Spiritual Gifts In General

Vs 1

Subject: Spiritual Gifts

1. Gifts given by the Spirit

1 Cor 2:10-16; 12:7

2. Gifts that only some of the believers in Corinth had

1 Cor 12:29-30: 4-6

(Those who had the more “spectacular” gifts were guilty of assuming superiority over those who had not received these particular gifts.)

3. Paul states that there are “greater gifts” 1 Cor 12:31, and that these greater gifts are the less dynamic ones.

1 Cor 12:22-24

4. He is going to put the subject of the gifts in their proper perspective.
5. Understanding this is important, for Paul “does not want them to be unaware”.
Rom 1:13; 1 Cor 10:1; 2 Cor 1:8
(uninformed – Rom 11:25; 1 Thes 4:13)
6. The lack of proper understanding in regards to this subject had produced problems for the Church at Corinth.

Vs 2

You know – they knew very well, the situation they were in when they were pagans...

1. Being continually led astray – to the dumb idols
Isa 40:18-20; Ps 115:4-8 (Ps 135:15-18 identical to Ps 115)

Vs 3 Therefore – they are to know

1. Any person “speaking by the Spirit”
will not say “Jesus is accursed”
will say “Jesus is Lord” Phil 2:9-11; 1 Jn 4:1-6

2. In context, Paul appears to be saying that people, prior to salvation, can be found saying anything, even that which contradicts.

But, after salvation, their message becomes consistent – Jesus!

Also, it would appear that “speaking in tongues” is in mind when making this statement because it is central to the discussion that is to follow.

1 Jn 4:1-6 (The need for love is connected with this discussion 1 Jn 4:7-12 and 1 Cor 13.)

Verses 4 – 11 The Diversity of Gifts

Vs 4-6 There are a variety of gifts, ministries (works) and effects.
There is also unity in God – same Spirit, Lord, God!

Vs 7 The works of the Spirit that appear outwardly different are given for one purpose: the Common Good.
1 Cor 10:23-24
(If the one in possession of the gift benefits from the gift, it is only incidental.)

Vs 8-11 This list of gifts includes only the gifts which we would call “spectacular” and therefore would lend themselves to the possessor of the gift feeling superior to those who do not possess such a gift.

1. Word of Wisdom – not intuition but rather wisdom given by the Spirit Himself. (Solomon received a “double” portion of this 1 Kgs 3:3-15; 4:29-34)

2. Word of Knowledge – this knowledge is the result of prophetic revelations and is joined with prophecy and the receiving of mysteries.

1 Cor 13:2

It may also involve receiving Divine understanding of previously revealed truth in the Scriptures.

3. Faith – While all believers are said to have faith, Eph 2:8, being included here as a gift of the Holy Spirit would indicate that this faith deals with something different and dynamic!

It must mean a faith that has special, visible results;
a faith that enables one to do miracles

1 Cor 13:2

4. Gifts of Healing – “gifts” is in the plural – indicating that the healing of different illnesses might require different forms of this gift.

5. Effecting of (Working) Miracles – a miracle is a supernatural act that occurs contrary to the laws of nature.

Man is the instrument and God is the agent.
Moses, Elijah, Elisha, the Gospels and the Early Church find many miracles occurring.

6. Prophecy – Foretelling: proclamation of new revelation from God
and Forth telling: declaring God’s already revealed
revelation 1 Cor 14:3
a. Foretelling is said to be done away with 1 Cor 13:8
b. Forth telling is not 1 Cor 14:3

7. Distinguishing of Spirits – the ability to discriminate between true and false religious teachers.

All Christians are required to do this, but a believer with this Gift would have excelled in it.

It is in reference to “new teachings” being given as the New Testament was being written and thus this gift takes on a limited meaning.

1 Cor 14:37-38; 2 Cor 11:13-15

8. Tongues – see notes “The Sign Gifts”

9. Interpretation of Tongues – the supernatural ability to interpret a language which is unknown to the hearer. There were occasions when one individual had both the gift of tongues and the gift to interpret tongues.

1 Cor 14:5, 13

Verses 12 – 31a

Vs 12-27 An extended discussion of the value of every believer to the Body of Christ, apart from the value of the specific gift which is possessed by them.

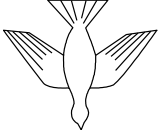
Vs 28 Paul gives a partial listing of the gifts with a statement relating to their ranking of importance.

Vs 29-30 A truth emphasized

Vs 31 Nowhere does the NT teach that an individual believer is to seek for a gift!

They are distributed as a result of the Holy Spirit's will (vs 1). This verse is directed to the Body (the Church), not to the Individuals. This interpretation would fit the NT context.

The Church is admonished to seek the greater gifts for their local Congregation. Additional gifts should be sought that would Benefit the whole group the most. (remember vs 7)



CHAPTER 13

Again, Chapter 13 is not dealing with a different subject, but rather, it is a continuation of Paul's teaching that started in Chapter 12 and continues through Chapter 14.

For our purpose, only verses 8 through 13 will be looked at.

Paul, in Chapter 13, states that love contrasts not with the gifts but with the selfish way in which the Corinthian believers had been using the gifts. Vs 1-7

Paul will add emphasis to this in Chapter 14 when he reminds them that Prophecy edifies the Church while their use of tongues edifies the one exercising the gift.

1 Cor 14:4

Vs 8

Love never fails

1. Love is eternal and therefore it is the greatest.. Vs 13

2. Faith and Hope are temporary – Love is not!

Rom 8:24-25; 2 Cor 5:6-8

3. Prophecy, Tongues and Knowledge are temporary – Love is not!

+ Prophecy will be done away with. It will be stopped with the end of the Apostolic Age and the completion of the Bible.

+ Tongues (along with the other sign gifts) will cease of their own accord because miraculous signs necessary to confirm the source of the revelation will no longer be required.

+ Knowledge will be done away with because the source

of God's revelation will have been established and temporary and partial words from God will no longer be needed.

+ If we want a word from God – Read The Bible!!

Vs 9 – 10 What is the perfect of verse 10? (What is the partial)?

Several answers have been put forth:

1. The completion of the canon
2. The death of believers and their transformation when they enter the Lord's presence.
3. The Rapture of the Church
4. The Return of Christ
5. The Eternal State

I believe that number 1 is correct for the following reasons:

1. Verse 9 uses the word "know " not are. Therefore the contrast between "knowing in part" or "the partial" is put up against "the perfect" or knowing fully.
2. Both tongues and prophecy are revelational in nature so it would make sense that the perfect coming would also be revelational.
3. Thus when the complete (revelation) comes, the (gifts communicating or partial revelation) pass away. (They are no longer necessary).

Vs 11 This illustration is to help understand the difference between the partial and the complete. It does not determine which of the above answers is correct because it can be applied to any one of them equally.

Vs 12 Paul is contrasting a person looking in a mirror "dimly" with One looking in a mirror "face to face".

1. Num 12:6-8 may well bear on what Paul is saying. With the prophets, God revealed Himself indirectly and indistinctly (in a vision – dream – or dark saying); not so with Moses!

2. Miriam and Aaron brought a charge against Moses concerning his role as a prophet, Num 12:2. In the same way 1 Cor 13:12 is referring, not to a believer's future fellowship with God, but to revelation from God.

3. "Now but then" of vs 12 coincides with "partial to perfect" vs 9-10

- + Paul lived during the "now", whereas believers of today are living in the "then".
- + A believer in Paul's day was seeing his own face "dimly" in the imperfect mirror of partial revelation, while believers today see their own faces in the superior mirror of completed revelation; that is, the completed Bible.

4. What does "then I shall know fully, just as I also have been fully known" mean?

- + "I know" and "I shall know" are two different words!
I know now. I shall know fully later.
- + The verb "to know" in the clause "now I know in part" must have "myself" as its object.
Then "I shall know completely".
- + Interpretation:
 - a. Paul was saying at the time he was writing that he had an incomplete revelation.
(God was revealing through other Apostles, both at the time he was ministering and after his death.
- John/Book of Revelation)
 - b. When the revelation would be completed (90AD), he would be able to see himself as God sees him.
 - c. Because believers today possess the completed revelation (Bible), they are able to understand what God teaches about themselves, their potential, their limitations, and their means.

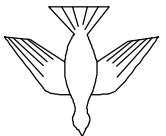
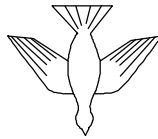
+ God has made it available for them to obtain victory over sin in a clear and detailed manner that was not possible before the Bible was completed.

d. Paul, in his lifetime, knew 1 Cor 15 and 1 Thes 4 & 5, but Revelation had not yet been revealed and would not be for another 25 years.

5. What does “know fully just as I also have been fully known” mean? 2 Pet 1:3 How sufficient is the Bible?

Vs 13

Faith and Hope abide long after Prophecy; Tongues and Knowledge end.
Love, again, is Eternal!



CHAPTER 14

Vs 1 Pursue love – that enters Eternity with you, rather than that which is so temporary in nature.
At the same time – “Desire” Spiritual gifts – that are undividedly edifying to the Body (Church). 1 Cor 12:31

Verses 2 – 19 is a contrast between speaking in Tongues and Prophecy.
Such an extended discussion is necessary because of the value that the Church had placed on these respective gifts.

1. Overview of the one who speaks or prays in a Tongue
 - + In context it is clear that this is being done publicly and not in private. The discussion evolves around the effect that it has with the one doing the speaking and the effect on the one who is present while the speaking is being done.
2. By definition – speaking in a Tongue is speaking a language which is not known by the one doing the speaking, but is knowable to someone.

Vs 2 The possessor of a spiritual gift can utilize his gift at will.
(Paul has a great deal to say about the Tongues-speaker controlling themselves in this very chapter.)

1. If the purpose of Tongues is a witness to the Jew, it can still be used to pray or speak in the assembly, but if done so, the believers in the assembly might not know what is being said (an evangelist exercising his gift in an assembly of believers produces a similar problem – it doesn't fit.)
 - + In this case only God would know what was being said.
Vs 2
 - + The one speaking in the Tongue would only be edifying himself Vs 4 – wrong 1 Cor 12:7
 - + Without someone there to interpret what is being said, the exercise of the gift is meaningless. Vs 5,6,9,11,13
 - + To exercise the gift of Tongues in an improper way results in an unfruitful self-edification. Vs 14-17

- Vs 19 Is not saying that Tongues-speaking which is unfruitful self-
edification is OK in private but not in the assembly.
It is weighing the value of its practice when it is done for the
wrong purpose ---It has NO VALUE. (5/1000).
- + The superior value to the assembly of having someone
prophecy (forthtell) is used to contrast the value to both
the one speaking in a Tongue and to the assembly that
observes it.
- Vs 20 – 25 Application to what Paul has taught since 1 Cor 12:1.
- Vs 20 Get it right!
- Vs 21-22 Tongues were given by the Holy Spirit as a sign to
unbelieving Israelites – not for use in the Church or for
personal use by the believer.
- Vs 23 If therefore – is it not obvious?!!
- Vs 24-25 If on the other hand, Tongues are not involved but prophecy
is the focus of the assembly....
- Vs 26-33 Paul’s teaching concerning how he wants the assembly to
Function.
- Again – No where does the Bible indicate that the exercise of a
Spiritual Gift is for private use. They are gifts given to individuals
To benefit the ministry of the Body!
- Vs 24-40 Final Conclusion