

THE MIRACULOUS GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (1)
1 Corinthians 12:1-11

Introduction:

1. Many today claim to possess the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit.
 - a. Some claim to speak in tongues.
 - b. Others believe they have the power to heal miraculously.
 - c. Still others affirm they have the gift of prophecy.
2. There is no doubt miracles happened in Bible times!
3. There are four notable periods when miracles were prominent:
 - a. At the creation of all things (Gen. 1 and 2).
 - b. During the time of Moses (Exod. 7 - 12; 14; 16; 17; Num. 20).
 - c. During the days of Elijah and Elisha (1 Kings 18; 2 Kings 2; 4:1-7; 4:8-44).
 - d. During the time of Christ and the apostles.
4. What does the Bible teach about miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit?
 - a. What is a miracle?
 - b. What were the miraculous gifts possessed by the early church?
 - c. What was the purpose of these miraculous gifts?

Discussion:

- I. WHAT IS A MIRACLE?
 - A. Many use the word “miracle” very loosely today:
 1. For an awesome happening according to natural law.
 2. For a matter of coincidence.
 3. For a narrow escape.
 - B. The most common Greek word translated “miracle” in the New Testament is “dunamis.”
 1. Dunamis is “power, inherent ability, used of works of a supernatural origin and character such as could not be produced by natural agents and means” (Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words).
 2. Others words referring to miracles such as “signs, wonders, and mighty works” have a similar meaning as dunamis, but refer to the effects such acts have on the witnesses (Acts 2:22; John 5:36).
 - C. Webster’s Dictionary defines the English word “miracle” as “an event or effect in the physical world deviating from the known laws of nature, or transcending our knowledge of these laws; an extraordinary, anomalous, or abnormal event brought about by

superhuman agency.”

- D. The difference between things happening according to the laws of nature and miracles can be clearly seen in the Bible.
1. God created plants and animals miraculously, but they continue today by natural law (Gen. 1:11, 12, 21, 24).
 2. God created the first man from the dust of the earth, and the first woman from the side of man; today, the human race continues by the natural law of procreation (Gen. 3:19; 2:21- 23; 1:28).

II. WHAT WERE THE MIRACULOUS GIFTS POSSESSED BY THE EARLY CHURCH?

- A. Mark lists five miraculous gifts (Mark 16:17-20).
1. Casting out demons (evil spirits):
 - a. Demon possession was common during the ministry of Jesus.
 - b. Paul cast out demons at Ephesus but some Jewish exorcists failed to do so (Acts 19:11-16).
 2. Speaking with new tongues (languages):
 - a. They were actual human languages, not gibberish or “ecstatic utterances” (Acts 2:4-11).
 - b. They would be an aid in preaching the Gospel to the whole world.
 3. Taking up deadly serpents:
 - a. The Bible does not sanction one’s doing this to test God or even to test his own faith!
 - b. Paul was bitten by a viper, but was unaffected by it (Acts 28:1-6).
 4. Drinking deadly poison:
 - a. The Bible does not sanction one’s drinking poison to test God or to test his faith!
 - b. If one should accidentally drink poison, or be forced to drink it, it would not harm him.
 5. Healing the sick:
 - a. Jesus healed many of various diseases.
 - b. Peter and John healed a lame man (Acts 3:1-11).
 - c. Philip healed the paralyzed and the lame (Acts 8:7).
 - d. Peter healed Aeneas (Acts 9:33, 34).
- B. First Corinthians 12:4-11 lists nine miraculous gifts including three of the five mentioned in Mark.

1. The “word of wisdom” was wisdom given miraculously by the Holy Spirit for teaching and counseling.
2. The “word of knowledge” was God’s inspired doctrine revealed to those who possessed this gift.
3. “Faith” was not the ordinary faith which comes by hearing God’s Word (Rom. 10:17).
 - a. This is miraculous faith which could move mountains (Matt. 17:20; 21:18-22; 1 Cor. 13:2).
 - b. This faith was not to save, but to do great works.
4. “Gifts of healing” refer to healing the sick, restoring sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, etc.
 - a. Jesus healed many during His personal ministry.
 - b. The apostles and evangelists also healed many.
5. “The working of miracles” is a general term which does not specify the miracles.
 - a. Miracles such as Jesus’ stilling the storm or walking on water may be included (Matt. 8:23-27; 14:22-33).
 - b. Miracles which do not come under one of the other headings may be included.
6. “Prophecy” had long been a gift God gave to men who delivered His message.
 - a. The Old Testament prophets were spokesman to the nation of Israel (2 Pet. 1:20,21).
 - b. New Testament prophets had the ability to reveal the future (Acts 11:27, 28; 21:8 - 11).
 - c. Women also had this gift (Acts 2:17; 21:9).
 - d. Paul said prophecy would cease (1 Cor. 13:8).
7. “Discerning of spirits” was necessary because the Devil often counterfeits the true.
 - a. This gift would help the Christians to know if one was speaking by the Spirit or was a pretender.
 - b. John urged Christians to “test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1).
8. “Different kinds of tongues” were various languages which the speaker had not learned, but were miraculously given by the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-11).
 - a. These were a sign for unbelievers (1 Cor. 14:22).
 - b. Paul said tongues would cease (1 Cor. 13:8).
9. “The interpretation of tongues” was the ability to translate what another was saying who spoke in tongues.

- a. The speaker could not interpret for himself.
- b. When tongues ceased, this gift also ceased.

III. WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF MIRACULOUS GIFTS?

- A. Miraculous gifts were necessary to reveal the Word of God.
 1. Jesus promised His apostles the Spirit would guide them into all truth (John 16:13).
 2. It is by the revealed truth that the Spirit convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment (John 16:7-12).
 3. Inspired men spoke words taught by the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 2:6-13).

- B. Miraculous gifts were necessary to accredit the messengers of the truth.
 1. Nicodemus recognized Jesus was from God because of the miracles He worked (John 3:2).
 2. John recorded Jesus' miracles to cause us to believe that He is the Christ, the Son of God (John 20:30, 31).
 3. On Pentecost, Peter said Jesus was "attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him..." (Acts 2:22).
 4. Paul reminded the Thessalonians that "our Gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit..." (1 Thess. 1:5).

- C. Miracles confirmed (proved) the message preached by the inspired apostles and early evangelists was of divine origin.
 1. "They went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs" (Mark 16:20).
 2. The author of Hebrews spoke of the great salvation, "which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those that heard Him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit..." (Heb. 2:3, 4).
 3. The Word of God has been revealed and confirmed so we have no further need of miraculous gifts today!

Conclusion:

1. We are blessed to have the complete and confirmed Word of God.
2. This inspired Word tells us what to do to be saved (Mark 16:15, 16).
3. It also tells us how to live in order to please God (Rev. 2:10).