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Week 9: Spiritual Gifts



Currently, there are two views about spiritual gifts in the Church. The first view is that none of the spiritual gifts have stopped. That ALL of the spiritual gifts present before the cross are still used by believers today. This can be seen in the charismatic or Pentecostal churches and denominations. Their evidence for this is the signs and miracles in the book of **Acts**. The second view, and I believe the correct view, is that some of the spiritual gives have stopped and are no longer used by believers today. For example **Bezalel and Ohaliab** were **filled with the Spirit of God** with the ability **make ingenious designs, to forge with gold, silver and bronze, was well as cutting stones and carving wood, to work in all manner of craftmanship** for the Tabernacle **(Exodus 31:1-6).** I don't know of anyone today claiming this spiritual gift.

The book of **Acts** is a transitional book serving as a bridge between the life of **Messiah** and the epistles, or letters, in the B'rit Chadashah. Therefore, since **Acts** is a transitional book and a historical book, and you can't establish doctrine based upon history. You base doctrine on theological statements in the epistles. Historical facts can illustrate the doctrine but they cannot develop doctrine on their own.

How would **Yeshua** start **His** Church? How would the Gospel spread from, **“Jerusalem, and through all Judah, and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8)? ADONAI** gave **the Spirit of God**, and **His** authority to **the 120 in the upper room (Acts 1:15)** at **Shavu’ot**. They were baptized with **the Ruach Ha’Kodesh** and began to speak in known **tongues/languages** to the **Jews** who had come from all over the world. **The disciples** were able to preach the gospel to them in their own language so that could understand it.

Among **the 120**, however, **the disciples in the upper room** were given the power and authority that **Yeshua** had to authenticate their message. **Yeshua** used signs and miracles to authenticate **His** ministry. Four hundred years before **Messiah** was born, the rabbis divided miracles into two categories. The first category was that anyone could perform miracles if they were empowered by **the Holy Spirit** to do so. The second category were miracles that only **the Messiah** could perform based on **Isaiah 35:5-6.** The miracles that **Yeshua** performed during **His** earthly ministry authenticated that **He** was the promised **Messiah** of **Isra’el** (see my commentary on **Isaiah, to see link click Gl – The Three Messianic Miracles**). Likewise, when **Messiah** ascended to be with **the Father**, and **the Holy Spirit** was sent to the Church, **the apostles**, and only **the** twelve chosen **apostles** were given the same exact ability to perform signs and miracles that **Yeshua** had (see my commentary on **Acts Ap – Peter Heals a Lame Beggar: A Closer Look at Miracles in Acts**). As a result, there were a tremendous number of miracles performed by **the apostles** during the first half of the book of **Acts**. But as the Church grew and was established, the miracles decreased dramatically (see **Acts Ae – Miracles in the Book of Acts**). When all the books of the Bible were written, the canon of Scripture was closed (see my commentary on **Galatians Ae – The Dates of Books in the B’rit Chadashah**). There are four lists of spiritual gifts in the Bible: **Romans 12:6-8; First Corinthians 12:8-10** and **28, Ephesians 4:11-12,** and **First Peter 4:9-10**. Every believer has at least one spiritual gift. Usually, a dominant gift, and a secondary gift.

Who gives you your spiritual gift? At the moment of salvation, **the Holy Spirit** gives you your spiritual gift(s): **Now to each one of the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good (First Corinthians 12:7).**

What is the purpose of spiritual gifts? To equip His people for works of service, so that the body of Messiah may be built up (Ephesians 4:12). A healthy church will have all the spiritual gifts. A church lacking some of these

spiritual gifts cannot **equip** or **build up** its people. Your spiritual gift is for the benefit of *others*. *Not* yourself.

How do you know what is your spiritual gift? Think about what you love to do for **the Lord**. Your gift should excite you. You can't wait to exercise it.

How do you know if you actually have that spiritual gift? A good tree bears good fruit and a bad tree bears bad fruit (Matthew 7:17-18). Look for **good fruit**, and listen to the counsel of mature believers.

Spiritual gifts that are in operation today:

Exhortation (Romans 12:8): to come along side someone with words of encouragement, comfort, consolation, and counsel to help them be all **God** wants them to be. Those with this gift can uplift and motivate others as well as challenge and rebuke them in order to foster spiritual growth. The goal of an encourager is to everyone in the church continually building up the body of **Messiah** and glorifying **God (Acts 11:23-24, 14:21-22).**

Giving (Romans 12:8): to share what material resources you have with liberality and cheerfulness without thought of return. **The Ruach Ha'Kodesh** imparts this gift to some in the Church to meet the various needs of the church and its ministries, missionaries, or of people who do not have the means to fully provide for themselves. The goal is to encourage and provide, giving all the credit to **God's** love and provision. Those with this gift love to share with others and the overflow of blessings **God** has given them. They are also excellent stewards and will often adjust their lifestyles in order to give more to the spread of the gospel and the care of the needy. They are grateful when someone shares a need with them and are always joyful when they can meet that need **(Second Corinthians 8:1-5, 9:6-15; Acts 4:32-27; Galatians 4:15; Philippians 4:10-18).**

Leadership (Romans 12:8; First Corinthians 12:28): It is closely related to **administration**. This leader can see the big picture, set priorities, organize, direct and lead others to godly goals **with diligence**. The leader is detail oriented, and they will go to great lengths to protect those under their care and are well equipped to lead through crisis situations. The Bible often uses the analogy of a shepherd to highlight the relationship between a leader and his or her followers. A good shepherd leads his/her sheep to safety and provides provisions and protections for his/her flock. The shepherd's goal is not his/her own status, but rather to serve and

improve the condition of his/her sheep **(Titus 1:4-5; First Thes 5:12; First Timothy 3:4-5** and **12, 5:17)**.

Mercy (Romans 12:8): to be sensitive toward those who are suffering, where physically, mentally, or emotionally, so as to feel genuine sympathy with their misery, speaking words of compassion, but more so, caring for them with love to help alleviate their distress. The gift of mercy is founded in **God's** mercy towards us as sinners and is consistently expressed with great compassion. Those with this gift are able to **weep with those who weep (Romans 12:15)** and **bear one another's burdens (Gal 6:2).** They are sensitive to the feelings and circumstances of others and can quickly discern when someone is doing well. They are typically good listeners and feel the need to simply "be there" for others **(Mt 5:7; Lk 10:30-37; James 3:17; Jude 22-23).**

Hospitality (First Peter 4:9-10): to warmly welcome people, even strangers, into one's home or church as a means of serving those in need **(Hebrews 13:2).** Those with this gift are sensitive to the feelings of others. They can host small or larger groups, welcome visiting missionaries, and support the efforts of others in the exercise of their gift. In fact every small group or Sunday school class needs someone with this gift to help create an inviting and caring atmosphere.

Service/Helps (Romans 12:7; First Corinthians 12:28): to identify tasks that need to be done in **God's** work, however menial, and use available resources to get the job done. **So, the Twelve, called together the whole group of the disciples and** said: **It is not right for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve** (Greek: *diakonous*) **tables (6:2).** It refers to any act of service done in genuine love for the edification of the believing community. Those with this gift do not seek recognition or a position in the spotlight, they just love to help out **(Acts 20:35; Second Timothy 4:11)**.

Teaching (Romans 12:7; First Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11): The person with the gift of teaching loves to study. The delivery of the material is only the tip of the biblical iceberg. The vast majority of the time spent with this gift is studying. Without this gift the congregations of **God** would quickly fall into error and sin. They hate when Scripture is abused or taken out of context. They love the truth and speak the truth in love. The effect of their ministry is the upholding of **God's Word** and the growth and maturity of **His Bride** until the day of **His** return **(James 3:1)**.

Discernment (First Corinthians 12:10): the ability to distinguish truth from error or falsehood by judging whether the behavior or teaching is from **God**, Satan, human error or human power. The congregations of **God** need those with the gift to warn believers in times of danger or keep them from being led astray by false teaching (also see **Acts 5:3-6, 16:16-18; First John 4:1**).

Faith (First Corinthians 12:8-10): to be firmly persuaded of **God's** power and promises to accomplish **His** will and purpose, and to display such a confidence in **Him** and **His** Word that circumstances and obstacles do not shake that conviction. **The Holy Spirit** distributes this gift to some in the congregations of **God** to encourage and build up the Church in her confidence in **God**. Those with the gift of faith trust that **God** is sovereign and **He** is good. They take **Him** at **His** word and put the full weight of their lives in **His** hands. They expect **God** to move and are not surprised when **He** answers a prayer or performs a miracle **(Hebrews 11:1-40)**.

A Word of Knowledge (First Corinthians 12:8): is simply **the Holy Spirit** giving this spiritual gift to some believers to bring about understanding and to inform the church or individual believers. The person with this gift is usually well-versed in the Scriptures and often has committed much of it to memory. They can retain the truth and communicate it effectively at the appropriate times. The gift of knowledge allows a believer to relate the Scriptures, and especially the Gospel of **Yeshua Messiah**, to all aspects of life in this world. They can see how it connects to every situation and circumstance and how the reality and truth of the gospel is to inform every decision a believer makes **(Romans 15:14; Second Corinthians 2:14)**.

Wisdom (First Corinthians 12:8): to apply knowledge to life in such a way as to make spiritual truths quite relevant and practical in proper decision-making and daily life situations for yourself of others. Wisdom doesn't end with knowledge, but is expressed in transformed hearts and lives. They are able to take from their own life experiences and share what **God** has taught them through those things. They can easily recognize where a decision of action may lead and can warn against those that may be harmful or unfruitful. They can see through the confusion of a situation and can give direction that would help and individual or a group obtain a **God**-glorifying goal. The Church needs those with the spiritual gift of wisdom to guide her through uncertain of difficult times **(First Corinthians 1:17-31, 2:1-16; Colossians 1:9-10, 2:1-3; James 3:13-18)**.

Evangelism (Ephesians 4:11): to be the messenger of the Good News and to

proclaim that message with boldness. Evangelists are given the unique ability by **the Holy Spirit** to clearly and effectively communicate the gospel of **Yeshua Messiah** to others. They are burdened in their hearts for the lost and will go out of their way to share the truth to them. Evangelists are able to overcome the normal fear of rejection and engage non-believers in meaningful conversations about **Messiah**. This brings them great joy knowing that the **feet that bring good news are beautiful to those who believe (Isaiah 52:7;** also see **Ephesians 4:11, Acts 8:5-12, 26-40,** and **21:8; Matthew 28:18-20).**

Pastor (Ephesians 4:11): to be responsible for spiritually caring for, protecting, shepherding, guiding, and feeding the flock entrusted to one's care. The pastor loves the gospel of **Yeshua Messiah** and puts it at the center of his life and ministry. Pastors do not seek fame or recognition for themselves, but they are placed in a position of authority by **the Holy Spirit**. The role of a pastor is one of humility and service as he is reminded daily of his overwhelming need of **God's** grace for the task at hand **(Ephesians 4:11; Jeremiah 3:15; Acts 20:28, John 10:11-18)**.

These spiritual gifts were used during the first century of the Church, but ceased at the end of book of Revelation and the apostolic age.

Prophecy (Romans 12:6; First Corinthians 12:10; Ephesians 4:11): There were **prophets** in New Testament times; **Agabus (Acts 11:27-28, 21:10-11); Ana the prophetess (luke 2:36-38); Barnabas, Simon called Niger and Lucius the Cyrene (Acts 13:17); Judas and Silas (Acts 15:32); the four daughters of Philip who prophesied (Acts 21:9);** and **the apostle John** who prophesied in the book of **Revelation**. **Prophets** foretold either **near historical events** or **far eschatological events**. Once the last book in the Bible was written, the canon of Scripture was closed and there was no need of any further revelation. **God the Holy Spirit** had equipped believers with everything they would need to live a victorious life, and **prophecy** passed away. There is no continuous revelation.

Apostle (Ephesians 4:11; First Corinthians 12:28): Yeshua chose **twelve apostles**. After **Judas** hung **himself, Matthias** was chosen to replace **him (Acts 1:12-26). Paul** was called by **the Lord** to be an **apostle to the Gentiles (Acts**

9:15; Romans 1:1; First Corinthians 1:1, etc**).** When those **apostles** died, the Church was established and there was no need for any more **apostles**.

Healings (First Corinthians 12:9, 28, 30): The apostles healed just like **Yeshua** healed (see **A Closer Look at Miracles in Acts**). Those who claim that they have the gift of healing today, should be able to heal just like **Yeshua** and **the apostles**.

Miracles (First Corinthians 12:10, 28): The apostles performed miracles just like **Yeshua** did (see **Acts Ap – Peter Heals a Lame Beggar: A Closer Look at Miracles in Acts**). But even the miracles in **Acts** were not normative that time. They were highly unusual and only used to authenticate the message of **the apostles**. The early church was not a miracle working church, it had miracle working **apostles**. Once **the apostles** passed away, those authenticating miracles were no longer needed because the Church had been established.

Tongues/languages (First Corinthians 12:10; 14:27-28 and Isaiah 28:11-12 below): The gift of **languages** or **tongues** (Greek: *glossa,* meaning *the tongue that you speak with*), can be seen four times in the book, **Acts 2, Acts 8 Acts 10** and **Acts 19**. The same Greek word *glossa* is also used in **First Corinthians 12-14**. There is not set order leading up to immersion by **the Spirit** and subsequent **speaking in tongues**. Here in **Acts 2** with salvation coming to **the Jews**, the order was first repentance, then water immersion, and then receiving **Spirit** immersion by **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh** as evidenced by **speaking in languages**. Again, you don't build doctrine on history. Keep this order in mind and we will see how it was different with **the Samaritans, the Gentiles** and **John's disciples**.

Isaiah had been accused of using words that could not be understood. So he turns it around and said to the drunks: **Very well then, with foreign lips and strange tongues God will speak to this people (Isaiah 28:11)**. The foreign lips and strange tongues he was referring to were the Assyrians. Because the Jewish religious leaders did not believe the prophet's message that they shouldn't enter a covenant with Egypt (and in **30:1-17** we will see that they go ahead with the covenant against Isaiah's warning), the Assyrian army would invade Isra'el. And when they heard those strange tongues, the Assyrian language that they did not understand, it would sound like their own mocking stammering. **The hearing of the Assyrian tongue would be a sign of their own unbelief.**

This passage is referred to in the B'rit Chadashah where **Paul** quotes from **Isaiah** and says: Tongues, then, **are a sign**, not for believers, but for unbelievers, specifically unbelieving Jews, the unbelievers of this people **(First Corinthians 14:21-22)**. The purpose of **tongues** in a church or synagogue is not to bring unbelievers to faith. It has the same purpose it had in **Isaiah 28. It is a sign of Jewish unbelief.** It is not to bring them to **Messiah**, because **Paul**, quoting from this verse says, that even *then* they will not listen **(First Corinthians 14:21b)**. Therefore, **tongues** are **a sign of cursing** because of Jewish unbelief, **a sign of blessing** because the Dispensation of Grace had begun, and **a sign of authority** (from apostles, prophets, or a nation, authenticating that it was **God** who was speaking). **Peter**, for example, had **the keys to the Kingdom** and would be responsible for ushering in the three major ethnic groups to the faith in the first century, **Jews**, **Samaritans**, and **the Gentiles (Acts 10:44-46).**

Moses said that if **the Israelites** did not serve **God** joyfully and gladly then they would serve the enemies of the **LORD**. **Isra'el's** enemies would put an iron yoke around **their** necks until **they** were destroyed **(Deuteronomy 28:32)**. **He** continued to say: Yes, **ADONAI** will bring a nation against you from far away, from the ends of the earth, like an eagle swooping down, a nation **whose language you will not understand (Deuteronomy 28:49)**. If **Isra'el** had believed **Isaiah's** message and not aligned with Egypt there would not have been any invasion.

So just as **Isra'el's** disobedience in **Deuteronomy** led to the use of **tongues as a sign** of Jewish disobedience in the Land, so **Isra'el's** disobedience in the rejection of **Messiah** led to the use of **tongues as a sign of** Jewish disobedience in the Dispensation of Grace.

Interpretation of Tongues -languages (First Cor 12:10; 14:27-28):
Interpreting a known foreign language.