

1 Corinthians #20
The Gift and the Gifts
1 Corinthians 12:4

As we come to study the spiritual gifts, I want us to begin by looking at the singular use of the word "gift" in Acts 2:38, "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Look over at Acts 10:45, "And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit." And also look at Acts 11:17, "Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?" This is the place that we must begin if we are going to rightly divide the Word of Truth concerning *The Gift and the Gifts*.

The Bible clearly makes a difference between the "gift" of the Holy Spirit and the "gifts" of the Holy Spirit. The "gift" (singular) is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit whereby He comes to take up residence in the heart of the believer the moment that believer accepts Jesus Christ as personal Savior. The "gift" is for salvation to the lost. That is, when a lost person asks the Lord Jesus to come into his heart and save him, Christ comes into his heart in the Person of the Holy Spirit, as seen in Acts 2:38, "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sin, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." The Holy Spirit comes in the moment we are saved, as seen in John 3:5 where "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." When the Holy Spirit comes in, He in once for all, as seen in 1 Corinthians 12:13, "For by one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Greeks, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." And He abides with us forever, as seen in John 14:16, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever."

The "gifts" (plural) are imparted to the saved by the Holy Spirit for service (ministry) in the Church. The child of God is to "stir up," to rekindle his gift and not neglect it, as seen in 2 Timothy 1:6, "Wherefore, I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands." I am convinced that no gift will be evident without the stirring up, or the rekindling of the Holy Spirit. In other words, there must be a move of the Holy Spirit if we are to recognize our spiritual gifts.

Therefore, we will discuss first of all the "gift" (Singular) of the Spirit. The outpouring of the Spirit of God is the supreme characteristic of this marvelous, glorious age in which we live. This is the age of grace, the age of the

Holy Spirit, an age of the most blessed opportunities God has ever laid before man. Jesus said of John the Baptist that he was the greatest man born of woman; then the Master added in Matthew 11:11, **“Notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”** John did not live to see this incomparable age in which we live. He died before the cross, before the Resurrection, before the Ascension, before the outpouring at Pentecost. He was denied the privilege of becoming a part of the Church, the body of Christ. **But we have that holy privilege, and as great as was the noble Baptist, we are greater because of our celestial position in Christ. As a disciple of Christ, the least, humblest Christian can possess the fullness of the Holy Spirit without measure.** In the Old Testament the Holy Spirit came mightily *upon* men at different times and in different places. That is why David prayed in Psalm 51:11, **“Take not thy Spirit from me.”** In the New Testament He dwells mightily within men through the centuries. In the Old Testament He descended upon men for certain purposes. In this new age of grace, since Pentecost, He saturates men, indwells men, to the praise and glory of God. In the Book of Judges, "the Spirit of the Lord came upon" Othniel (3:10), Gideon (6:34), and Samson (13:25). **But in the Book of Acts, all may possess the divine Presence without hindrance or fear.** Men, women, young, old, servants, masters, boys, and girls, all may possess the riches of the “gift” to the utmost, as seen in Acts 2:16-18, **“But this is that which was spoken through the prophet, Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.”**

The resurrected Lord Jesus has now ascended into heaven, and the blessed Holy Spirit has been poured out on His glorious Church. To every lost man, woman, boy, or girl, Jesus reaches out His nail-scarred hands to touch their lives and to offer salvation to those who will receive Him by simple child-like faith. And with that salvation experience comes the “gift” (singular) of the Holy Spirit.

Look now at the "gifts" (plural) of the Holy Spirit. The words used to introduce us to the gifts of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12:1 is the Greek word "ta pneumatika," literally "the spirituals," or "spiritualities." Then he defines "the spirituals" in 1 Corinthians 12:7 as "the manifestation of the Spirit to every man to profit." **These gifts are impartations of the Holy Spirit and are not to be confused with natural talents and/or abilities.** An unbeliever, an atheist, an infidel, the vilest sinner, may have many natural talents. They are not "ta pneumatika," spiritual gifts. The gifts of the Spirit are given to the child of God for service (ministry) in the Church, the body of Christ.

Paul uses yet another word to describe these gifts of the Holy Spirit to the members of the churches. In 1 Corinthians 12:4,9,28,30,31, he uses the

Greek word "ta charismata," literally "grace gifts." The singular form of the word is "charisma." The word, "charisma," is obviously related to the word, "charis," "grace," "the free, unmerited favor of God." In the New Testament the use of the word "charisma" is quite extensive, ranging from the gift of salvation in Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift (charisma) of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord," to the gift of God's providential care in 2 Corinthians 1:11, "You also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift (charisma) bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf."

But usually the word "charisma" is used of special gifts given to man by God and, with the exception of 1 Peter 4:10, is used only in the New Testament by the Apostle Paul. Here again we must remember that the word does *not* refer to a natural talents and/or abilities. It refers to a grace gift, an undeserved favor from God to man. It refers to something bestowed that is neither purchased nor merited; it is given freely of God. Some men are naturally gifted, of high intelligence, possessing natural abilities. These are not "ta charismata." The "charismata" are supernatural abilities.

These charismatic gifts are bestowed by Christ upon His Ascension into heaven. They could be also called "ascension gifts," as seen in Ephesians 4:7-8, 11-12, "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore, he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men...And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some prophets and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry for the edifying of the body of Christ." **All spiritual gifts are based upon the victory of Christ upon the cross. Jesus entered into battle with Satan, death and the grave, and was victorious over all.** Therefore, He has the right to distribute the spoils, to dispense there marvelous presents.

Therefore, if God has the right to do so (and He does), spiritual gifts are sovereignly bestowed, as seen in 1 Corinthians 12:7, "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit." This truth is really brought to light in verse 11, "But all these worketh that one and the very same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will." **The choice of our gifts is made by the Holy Spirit.** We can ask, we can pray, we can covet (as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 14:39) but the decision lies beyond us. The power of choice is not ours and the Holy Spirit does not function at our command. **That is why envy, boasting, superiority are so out of place in the churches of our Lord.** Paul spoke of this needed humility in 1 Corinthians 4:7, "What makes you better than anyone else? What do you have that God hasn't given you? And if all you have is from God, why boast as though you have accomplished something on your own?" **All that we have in the kingdom and patience of Jesus is given to us by His gracious love.** There is no room for

personal boasting. Listen, the gifts are not even given as rewards. They are not indications of spiritual excellence or superiority. They are given to us "as the Spirit will." They are not given because we have sought them. They are not to be vaingloriously sought by men. Although we can ask in prayer, we do not receive them because we prayed for them or coveted them. **They are sovereignly given.** There are many Christians, who wait, weep, pray, beg, and agonize for some spiritual gift. They are not gotten that way. When Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 12:31, "But covet earnestly the best gifts," he was writing to a church that was confused concerning the origin and the reason for spiritual gifts in the first place. **They either had lost sight of, or did not understand, that the spiritual gifts among the members were sovereignly bestowed by the Holy Spirit.** Therefore, they were not to "covet" a particular "gift" as such, but that which would most benefit the ministry of Christ through His church.

No one person has all the gifts, but each person has at least one or more. Paul further writes in 1 Corinthians 12:27-30, "Now you are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts; and yet show I unto you a more excellent way." Each gift is needed and is not to be neglected. Every member is essential to the Body. **No great church became that way on a one-man ministry.** All, each, every one, great, small, rich, poor, old, young, have essential parts. Each one will possess an inner witness of the Spirit concerning the special gift that is his, and that inner witness will be corroborated, recognized, by the assembly of the saints. **When there is an understanding of the Word of God, there will be an understanding of the validity of the gifts of the Spirit.**

God has a purpose in bestowing these charismatic gifts. They are for service (ministry). Look once more at 1 Corinthians 12:7, "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit." They are "given to every man to profit." As you read Acts 1:8 this truth is seen a little more clear, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." The Lord did not say alone, "Ye shall be witnesses..." But He did say, "Ye shall receive power..." and (then) "ye shall be witnesses..." **That statement still stands unaltered. Neither that commission nor the provisions to carry it out have been withdrawn.** These spiritual gifts are the gifts of God to make us able to do His work in the earth. Paul was not stressing secondary things when he wrote 1 Corinthians 12:1, "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant." **Nor was he advising a small and meaningless thing when he urged Timothy to stir up the gift that was in him (2**

Timothy 1:6). These gifts are God's gifts of power for His disciples to evangelize the world.

The gift of the Spirit is given at the time of salvation. Do you have this gift? The gifts of the Spirit are given to all Christians. **Are you doing what God has gifted you to do?**