

102. FIRST CORINTHIANS 12.

I. BACKGROUND OF THE CHURCH AT CORINTH.

Corinth was a city of commerce, culture, religion and vice. Strategically located it became a trade centre for merchants from East and West. As its wealth increased so did its need for banks provided by pagan temples which people thought would never be robbed. As people lost respect for the gods, they robbed the temples. Jews provided a better banking service, so Jews became wealthy at Corinth. Corinth was the capital of the province of Achaia, a city of 700,000 people in Paul's day. Its population was Greek, Roman and Jewish.

Paul, Silas and Timothy started the church at Corinth in Acts 18 in 54AD. Many unbelieving, intolerant, bigoted Jews living in Corinth was the reason why tongues were so greatly used here. Paul spent two years teaching, preaching and organising the church. Paul wrote 1 Corinthians in 59 AD after his three year stay at Ephesus. (Acts 19).

II. PROBLEMS IN THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH.

Although they were "sanctified in Christ" (1 Corinthians 1:2), "enriched by Christ in all utterance and knowledge" (1 Corinthians 1:5), and "they came behind in no spiritual gift" (1:7), all was not well in the Corinthian church.

- i) **It was not a spiritual church, but a carnal church.**
- ii) **Division** (1:10; 11:18,19) and contentions (1:11). They followed human leaders (1 Cor. 1:12-15). Wherever tongues enters a church strong division will occur. The only tongues speaking church in the New Testament epistles was a carnal, divided church. Paul's answer to divisions is to preach the gospel (1:17).
- iii) **Selfishness.** They were carnal, babes in Christ (3:1). They were suing each other in court (6:6-8), they were misusing their Christian liberties (8:9-11), they were eating selfishly at their love feasts (11:20-22), and they were using the gifts for self-edification (1 Corinthians 12-14) just as many of today's Charismatics do.
- iv) **Criticism.** They thought that they had spiritually outgrown Paul (4:3). In 2 Corinthians 10:10 they said of Paul that "his speech is contemptible." Paul here describes the situation as "some are puffed up." (1 Corinthians 4:6,18-20).
- v) **Tolerance of evil in the church.** There was fornication (5:1,2) and they failed to separate from evil (5:7, 11-13).
- vi) **Heresy in the church**-usually accompanies evil. Some doubted the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15).

Paul established the church at Corinth during his second missionary journey (Acts 18), spending 18 months there, then he left. Other pastors came, then many problems arose, such as rebellion against Paul's apostolic authority, etc. They perverted almost every aspect of their lives. They brought problems from paganism into the church. They misunderstood the Holy Spirit and equated His work with pagan ecstatic activity of the Acropolis temple, with its 1000 prostitute priestesses. The mystery Babylon religion of Corinth aimed to get its devotees into a semiconscious ecstatic hypnotic spell to contact their deities. Their mind would go into neutral and their emotions would take over. This made them feel very good.

Many Charismatics today get into a similar state, attribute it to the Holy Spirit and conclude: "I felt so good, it must be of God." "Slaying in the Spirit" is a form of hypnosis and sometimes it is demonic. In 1 Corinthians 12:2, Paul says that they used to worship in the same way as pagans do in ecstatic demon religions. They were bringing these same old

patterns into the church and letting demons invade their worship services. They could not distinguish between the acts of Satan and the work of the Holy Spirit.

Does the New Testament teach that when a Christian goes out of control, falls into a trance, and faints that it is of God? No. People only counterfeit what is valuable. Satan was busy counterfeiting spiritual gifts at Corinth, as well as today. In accepting the counterfeit, we forfeit the genuine.

III. THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF GIFTS.

The Corinthians' self-indulgent spirit discussed in their sins of chapters 1-11, manifested itself also in spiritual gifts, thus producing selfishness, disunity, and chaos.

Do tongues turn a person inward to self concern and selfish interests, or does it open him up to others and their needs? Paul compares a church to a body, a family, an army, a temple, and a bride. The Corinthian church were like children with toys, instead of adults with valuable tools.

12:1 - "I would not have you ignorant." Though the Corinthians possessed spiritual gifts, they were ignorant of their nature, purpose and rules of use.

12:2 - "Ye know that ye were Gentiles, **carried away** unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led."

Paul reminds them of their past idol worshipping days, where they were **carried away**, led away or swept away in ecstasy, emotional hysteria, falling on the ground, and babbling in ecstatic speech, as Plato and Virgil record.

Paul is saying, "that is how it was when you were idolaters, but it should not be so now. Being swept away is not a sign of spirituality, but of your pagan days."

The Charismatic Movement today emphasizes "being carried away" or "slain in the spirit." The Holy Spirit does not produce what idolatrous worship produces. This practice is not in the New Testament, but is a worldwide occult experience. Paul here warns against false manifestations of spiritual gifts.

Note: In 1 Samuel 19:18-24, Saul has been trying to kill David. Saul sends three messengers after David, but the Spirit of God takes over them, restraining them from taking David (v.20), and causing them to prophesy. Finally Saul comes after David. The Spirit of God comes on Saul causing him to **prophesy** all day and all night, **take off his clothes** and **lie down naked**. This was God's **judgment** on him, to stop him from killing David. To suggest this is normal, desirable behaviour for all Christians today is absurd, it is not in the New Testament, and is ignoring the context. Such behaviour never happened to approved men of God.

Sadly, the modern Charismatic movement is ignorant of accurate knowledge of God's Word on tongues and other spiritual gifts. Paul's illustration in v.2 gently and firmly implies that demonic deception behind idols (1 Corinthians 10:20) can still harm the believer who enters the spiritual realm in ignorance of God's Word.

12:3 - "Wherefore, I give **you** to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."

Paul here warns the Corinthians and by application, the Charismatics today, that it is possible for Christians ("you" addressed) to speak by the Spirit of God or by another spirit. Some Corinthians became so confused, and their worship so paganized and frenzied, that they even allowed the Lord to be cursed in their meeting. Those who were saying "Jesus is accursed" claimed to be speaking by the Spirit of God. The Corinthians were warned of evil spirits who sought to creep in among them, pretending to be the Spirit of God. They too could give manifestations imitating the Holy Spirit's work. Before their conversion they had been led along blindly by the demon powers of these evil spirits, and had not gained sufficient maturity to be able to discern what was of the Holy Spirit and what was demon imitation, so they were given a way to test the spirits.

This tells us that evil spirits are still able to give manifestations of what seems like the Holy Spirit.

To truly say that Jesus is the Lord implies deity, as Lord implies sovereign authority. Old Testament Jews regarded Jehovah as too sacred to pronounce, so they used "Lord." When Polycarp was told to say "Caesar is Lord" (meaning God), he said "Jesus is Lord" (meaning God) instead.

"No man can say Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." Jesus said that the Holy Spirit **would not speak of himself**, but would always speak of and promote the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Howbeit when he the spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for **he shall not speak of Himself;He shall glorify Me.**" John 16:13,14.

The Holy Spirit is never the author of a statement like this:

"Now that you have received Christ you have salvation, but you need to receive the Holy Spirit to be a complete Christian."

This wrong statement says that Christ begins the work of salvation, but that the Holy Spirit completes it.

"that in **all things** He might have the pre-eminence." Colossians 1:18.

Gardiner summarizes 1 Corinthians 12:1-3 as follows:

- i) God intends Christians to be concerned with the **total of spiritual life**, not just the spiritual gifts.
- ii) God does not want us to be **ignorant** of the purpose of spiritual gifts.
- iii) When the Holy Spirit controls a Christian, he is **not carried away** nor out of control as the idolaters were.
- iv) The **Holy Spirit does not exalt Himself**, but exalts Christ as Lord.

12:4 "Now there are **diversities (varieties) of gifts**, but the **same Spirit.**"

Charisma (gifts) are divine abilities for believers to speak or serve in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Spiritual gifts are not natural talents or skills. God gives believers varieties of supernatural spiritual gifts just as players on a team have varieties of positions.

Two types of gifts are: Speaking gifts and serving gifts.

"If any man **speak**, let him speak as the oracles of God; .. if any man **minister**, let him do it as of the ability which God gives." 1 Peter 4:11.

A believer's gifts can be an overlapping combination of different amounts of several gifts, for example, 40% evangelism, 60% teacher. We may be strong in one gift, but not as strong in another gift.

12:5 "Now there are **differences (varieties) of administrations**, but the **same Lord.**"

Differences of administrations = varieties of ministries.

Even Christians with the same basic gift, may manifest that gift in many different ways.

E.g. One **teacher** may specialize in teaching children, while another teacher may specialize with adults. One **evangelist** may be able to powerfully address large crowds, while another evangelist's strength may be in one-to-one evangelism.

Every gift is a help or service gift, never given for self-edification. A gift exercised in private is a perverted gift. God gives his gifts **to us**, but to use for others. If we are **personally blessed** by using our gifts, then that blessing is the by-product, not the purpose of gifts.

"As every man has **received the gift**, even so **minister (use) the same to one another**, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." 1 Peter 4:10.

God lends us his gifts for us to use for other's benefits and for God's glory.

12:6 **Varieties of results.**

"There are **diversities (varieties) of operations**, but it is the **same God** which worketh all in all."

- **Operations** (1755) = the results energized by God's grace.

Both the bestowing and the empowering of gifts are God's domain. God gives us power to use spiritual gifts. We should not all expect to see the same results, but different results of our gifts. Every gift is as spiritual and important as any other. We should aim to discover, to faithfully use, and be grateful for the gift the Lord has given us. No other believer can take our place in God's work. God has given no one else exactly the same gift or ministry as you. If we do not use our gifts or fulfil our ministry it will not be fulfilled. We see the Trinity in verses 4,5,6. "The same Spirit...the same Lord,...the same God."

12:7 "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to **profit** withal."

- **Manifestation** (5321) = to make visible. The work of the Holy Spirit is given to profit or visibly benefit individuals and the church as a whole. If we fail to use our gifts, we hinder others in using their gifts, and we cripple our own ministry.

Four profitable benefits result from using our gifts:

1. Christians benefit as individuals.
2. Churches grow in quality and quantity.
3. New spiritual leaders are raised up.
4. Unity, joy, love and fellowship blossom in a church.

Gifts are for the good of the whole church, not for the individual enjoyment. The Corinthians were using their gifts selfishly to promote themselves, and not to prosper the church.

12:8-11 **Eighteen Gifts.**

Question: Why are gifts given?

Answer: To build churches by glorifying Christ, to edify others, to equip the church, and to arm soldiers.

<u>1 Cor. 12:8-10</u>	<u>1 Cor. 12:28-30</u>	<u>Romans 12:6-8</u>	<u>Ephesians 4:11</u>
Prophecy	Prophets	Apostles Prophets	Apostles Prophets Evangelists Pastor/Teacher
Wisdom Knowledge Faith Healing Miracles Discerning spirits Tongues Interpreting tongues	Teachers Healing Miracles Tongues Helps Government	Teachers Interpreting tongues	
		Ruling Ministry Exhortation Giving Mercy	

1. APOSTLE.

Apostolic requirements were:

- Must have seen the resurrected Christ. Acts 1:22; 1 Corinthians 9:1.
 - Commissioned directly by Christ. Acts 26:15-18; Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:13-16.
 - Accredited by miracles. 2 Corinthians 12:12.
- Apostle means "one sent forth with orders."

Two kinds of Apostles are:

- Twelve Apostles of the Lamb. (The office). Luke 6:13; 22:29,30; Revelation 21:14.
- Apostles of the churches. Barnabus (Acts 14:14), Andronicus and Junia (Romans 16:7); Paul, Silvanus, Timothy (1 Thessalonians 2:6); Epaphraditus is "your messenger" (apostolos in Greek) Philippians 2:25; unnamed brethren as messengers of the churches. (2 Cor. 8:23).

The work of an Apostle was to:

- Lay the foundation of the church. Ephesians 2:20.
- Confirming (authenticating) the word preached, before the Bible was completed by the signs of apostles. 2 Corinthians 12:12; Hebrews 2:3,4.
- Oversight that Philip's work at Samaria, and that Paul's work amongst the Gentiles were according to sound doctrine. Acts 8:14 and 15:1-29.

Miracles of Apostles. "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds." 2 Corinthians 12:12.

Apostles could heal "**all manner** of sickness...Go to the **House of Israel.**" Matthew 10:1,5-8.

The Apostles' miracles authenticated the gospel message, the messengers, struck terror in the minds of opponents, and established Christianity. Also notice in Hebrews 2:3-4 how confirming signs refer to Christ's and the apostle's ministry.

In Romans 15:18-19, Paul says that the Holy Spirit "wrought by me...through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God."

There are no Apostles today. Having fulfilled their function, they passed off the scene. Since no one today can be an eyewitness of the resurrected Christ, and since the church foundation has been laid, there can be no apostles today (Revelation 2:2). The office ceased.

When people claim to be apostles today, it is because they are trying to usurp a pastor's authority.

2. **PROPHET** means "one who proclaims the will of God, one to whom &through whom God speaks."

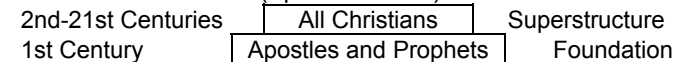
a) Sometimes it was **predictive** - Agabus predicted a famine (Acts 11:27,28), and sufferings for Paul (Acts 21:10-14).

b) Speaking the **mind of God** under immediate divine inspiration and revelation eg: instruct, warn.

Note: Direct inspiration distinguished prophecy from teaching. Before the completion of the scriptures, the prophets were the inspired revelators of God's teaching to the churches. They told the churches what to do, believe and teach. They spoke to edify, exhort & to comfort. 1 Cor.14:3.

Prophets: i) gave special **revelation** from God, and
ii) their message had the **authority** of God.

c) The **Passing of Prophets and Prophecy**. Their purpose was to span the gap between the Old Testament and New Testament, and to establish the church upon a firm foundation of Biblical truth (Ephesians 2:20).



d) The church in Ephesians 2:20 is like a building with a **foundation** laid in the first century by Christ, apostles and prophets, and a **superstructure** being built after the first century. Once a superstructure is being built, you don't relay the foundation. The gifts of apostle and prophet passed away during the foundation period of the church. Montanus the heretic in 150 AD claimed that he was an apostle and prophet with new revelations, equal to or above the Bible. The early Christians responded by vowing that nothing could be added to scripture. New revelations of Joseph Smith, Christian Science, Ellen White and JW's are false prophecies. Scripture is now complete. "We have also a more sure word of prophecy." 2 Peter 1:19.

e) A secondary meaning of prophet is the **pastor/teacher** of today **proclaiming** the revealed truth of first century apostles and prophets. First century prophecy revealed new truth to mankind. Teachers have taken the place of the prophets.

3. WORD OF WISDOM.

"to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom." 1 Corinthians 12:8.

Distinguish firstly between the **gift** of wisdom that only some had in the first century, and the **quality** of wisdom which is available to all Christians who ask in faith. James 1:5.

a) **Definition:** an immediate grasp of the secret plans and purposes of God. It is direct intuition of the humanly unknowable mysteries of God. This wisdom became Scripture.

b) Examples of the gift of word of wisdom:

1. **James** used the gift of wisdom at the Jerusalem council in Acts 15:13-18 to reveal God's purpose for the Gentiles, so clearly that there was "one accord" v.25, and "it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us." v.28.
2. **Paul** had the gift of wisdom, allowing him to know intuitively God's purposes, as stated by Peter: "Even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you." 2 Peter 3:15,16.
"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God." Romans 11:33-36.
"Which things also we speak, not in the words which **man's wisdom** teacheth, but which the **Holy Ghost** teacheth." 1 Corinthians 2:13.
3. **Peter's** confession: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16). Jesus replied "...flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my father which is in heaven." No man told Peter who Jesus really was, but God gave him the gift of the word of wisdom.
4. **Jesus** promised wisdom to his disciples when they would be taken to courts for Christ's testimony: "Settle it before in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: For I will give you a mouth and **wisdom**, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist." Luke 21:14,15.
5. **Stephen** speaking to the council who "were not able to resist the wisdom and Spirit by which he spake." Acts 6:10. Stephen spoke from God by a revelatory wisdom that amazed his opponents.
6. **Peter** and **John**, when called before the council to explain their preaching "through Jesus the resurrection of the dead", displayed this gift of wisdom that Christ promised, confounding the educated councillors at the spiritual depth and perception of their answers.
"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." Acts 4:13.

c) When did wisdom pass away?

When the Bible was complete, there remained no more need for the **gift** of wisdom, although the **quality** of wisdom is available to all who ask for it in faith. (James 1:5). The Bible is now our source of wisdom. Doesn't the Bible tell us to pray for wisdom (James 1:5)?
"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally,...and it shall be given him." The gift of wisdom was not given to all men, but the quality of wisdom can be.

4. WORD OF KNOWLEDGE. 1 Corinthians 12:8.

- a) **Definition:** The ability to know and understand the mind and will of God. Knowledge is seeing as the Holy Ghost sees. It was not learned knowledge, but revealed truth.
- b) **Examples of knowledge:**
 - i) **Elisha** knew supernaturally about his servant Gehazi's greedy scheme to get money from Naaman. (2 Kings 5:20-27). (2 Kings 6:8-12).
 - ii) **Elisha** knew supernaturally of Syrian King Benhadad's war plans against Israel.
 - iii) **Peter** knew that Ananias kept back part of the price of the land. Acts 5:3,4.(Acts 27:21-24)
 - iv) **Paul** knew from God that his ship would be wrecked, but that all would survive to land.

c) It is not natural knowledge acquired by study.

During the Reformation scholars like Erasmus, Luther and others saved the world from the grip of Roman Catholicism. If they had given in to laziness, or relied on some word of knowledge to come to them, they would have achieved very little. God tells us to: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God." 2 Timothy 2:15.

d) Is the word of knowledge available for us today?

"Whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away." 1 Corinthians 13:8.
Knowledge will vanish away, make idle, be inoperative, rendered of no effect after it's temporary use was fulfilled by 96 AD. Hence, intuitive knowledge is not available today.

e) When did knowledge vanish away?

"When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part (knowledge and prophecy) shall be done away." 1 Corinthians 13:10. The "perfect" is the completed New Testament by 96 AD.

5. DISCERNING OF SPIRITS.

a) Definition: Judgment by evidence whether spirits are evil or of God.

The danger of false prophets required this gift to recognize the truth or falsity of their utterances. Because the prophet spoke by revelation, false prophets were inevitable. Paul told his converts not to despise prophesyings, but to prove all things. (1 Thessalonians 5:20).

b) Examples of spirit discernment:

1. **Peter** clearly discerned Simon the sorcerer to be false, when Philip could not. (Acts 8:18-23).
2. **Paul** who had the gift of discernment saw clearly into the very soul of the false prophet Elymas who was seeking to stop the conversion of Sergius Paulus. (Acts 13:9-11).
As the New Testament had not yet been completed, there was no written word to appeal to except the Old Testament. The New Testament's completion in 96 AD made this gift of discernment **obsolete**, as we can now check every statement with the Bible.
Today we need discernment, but this is based upon knowing the Bible. Hebrews 5:11-14 states that, "by reason of use have their **senses exercised to discern** both good and evil."

6. HEALING. "To another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit." 1 Cor. 12:9. There are different kinds of healings for different kinds of sicknesses. We can be sick in our body, mind, or spirit.

a) Errors about the gifts of healing:

- i) **Healing is in the atonement.** "with his stripes we are healed." Isaiah 53:5.
This predicts Christ healing people's souls of sin. If healing is in the atonement, why does any Christian ever die? We are not promised freedom from sickness or disease until after the resurrection. "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth **in pain** together until now. And not only they, but **ourselves also**, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, **waiting for the adoption**, to wit, the redemption of **our body**." Romans 8:22,23.
This redemption is at Christ's second coming, "Who shall change our vile body." Phil. 3:21.

ii) **All sickness is due to sin** - False.

Some sickness is due to sin, eg. 1 Corinthians 11:30-32.

Many other reasons for sickness are:

- a) Satanic in origin (eg. Job, the woman healed in Luke 13:11-26).
- b) Burden of serving God (eg. Epaphroditus in Philippians 2:25-30).
- c) From God to deepen our spiritual life (eg. Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10).
- d) God's glory (John 9:1-3).

If all sickness was the result of sin, then Job's comforters would all have been right (Job 2:4,5; 4:7,8), and once the sin was confessed, he could claim relief from the illness.

iii) **God always wills to heal** - False.

If the sick person does not get healed, they claim it is due to sin in his life or lack of faith. **Trophimus** was left at Miletum sick (2 Timothy 4:20), **Timothy** needed to take a little wine for his stomach's sake (1 Timothy 5:23), Paul's thorn in the flesh (2 Corinthians 12:7-9), Jesus only healed one man at the pool of Bethesda (John 5:1-9), although many lay there sick.

c) **Gifts of healing in the first century, and God's general healing today.**

God often healed in answer to prayer. Examples include:

- **Abimelech** was healed in answer to Abraham's prayer (Genesis 20:7).
- **Miriam** was healed by God when Moses prayed for her (Numbers 12:14).
- **Hezekiah** was healed by God in answer to his prayer (Isaiah 38:4,5).

The Apostles could exercise gifts of healing at will, without faith or expectancy in the person being healed. Examples include:

- **Peter** healing the lame man at the temple gate (Acts 3:11).
- By the hands of the **apostles**...they were healed **every one** (Acts 5:12-16).
- **Philip** exercised gifts of healing at Samaria (Acts 8:5-7).
- **Paul** at Ephesus "God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul." (Acts 19:11,12).
- **Paul** healed Eutychus at Troas (Acts 20:6-12).

This class of men who had gifts of healing at will, ceased in the first century. Who can heal 100% of sicknesses today? No one.

d) **Gifts of healing were a sign.**

- i) "These **signs** shall follow them that believe,...they shall lay hands on the sick, and **they shall recover**...the Lord working with them (Apostles), and confirming the **word with signs** following." (Mark 16:17,18,20).
These are clearly sign gifts. These signs were tokens, or marks of divine authority and power, to authenticate the Apostles and the New Testament as from God.
- ii) "**Jesus**....a man approved of God among you by miracles, and wonders, and **signs**.." (Acts 2:22 and John 20:30,31). Jesus' signs proved his claims about himself to be true.
- iii) "Was confirmed unto us by **them** (apostles) that heard him (Christ); God also bearing **them** (apostles) witness, both with **signs** and **wonders**, and with divers miracles, and **gifts of the Holy Ghost**, according to his will." (Hebrews 2:3,4.)
Gifts of healing were God's signature on the truth of the Gospel.
- iv) Paul uses **signs** as a **proof** of his own apostolic ministry:
"Truly the **signs** of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in **signs**, and wonders, and mighty deeds." (2 Corinthians 12:12).

Therefore, gifts of healing were a sign to authenticate the message, the New Testament as the word of God, and the messengers (apostles) in the founding days of Christianity.

e) **Gifts of healing were Temporary**

- i) When the word of God was **completed** (Greek "teleion"), and **codified**, the purpose for the gifts of healing was fulfilled and the sign gifts were no longer needed. Now the basis for belief is faith in the Bible's promises, not by sight of healing miracles, etc...In this post-apostolic age of grace, we are to "walk by faith, not by sight." (2 Corinthians 5:7).

- ii) **Note:** "the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna anymore..." (Joshua 5:11,12).
The miracle of manna in the wilderness was no longer needed because Israel ate the fruit of the land from then on. So it is with us today. The miraculous sign gifts are no longer needed, because we have the written word of God to base all decisions on today. Since the purpose for gifts of healing are ended, the gifts of healing are withdrawn.

- f) We see this withdrawal of healing gifts develop progressively in Paul's life. There was a time when God wrought special miracles by Paul's hands "so that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the **diseases departed** from them, and evil spirits went out from them." (Acts 19:12).

Question: Why, later on, could Paul or Timothy **not** heal Timothy's stomach?(1 Timothy 5:23). Why could Paul, Epaphroditus, or any of his workers not heal Epaphroditus? (Philippians 2:25).
Why? Because as the New Testament was progressively completed, so also were the temporary gifts of healing progressively withdrawn.

- g) Peter healed at will in Acts 3:1-9, Acts 5:12-16, Acts 9:36-42, yet modern "healers" can do nothing like the apostles.

- h) Dr. Nolen wrote the book, "Healing: A doctor in search for a miracle" after investigating worldwide claims of Charismatic healings like Kathryn Kuhlman's and others, he states:

"I have been unable to find any such miracle worker."

Claims of healing are cheap. Proof of healing is scarce. Don't be deceived by unsubstantiated Charismatic claims. Some claimed healings are due to hypnotism, and the power of suggestion related to the autonomic nervous system. Kuhlman had trained herself to deny, emotionally and intellectually, anything that might threaten the validity of her ministry. If you see a genuine healing today, it is an individual act of God, not due to a somebody with 'gifts of healing.'

i) **What about claimed healings today?**

- a) They may be due to **hypnotism**. Some healings can happen through hypnotherapy and the surrendered mind of the seeker.
Let no one claim that these are the greater works than those of Christ (John 14:12). Two old ladies who were crippled in wheelchairs came out the front in a healing service to be healed. They got out of their wheelchairs after being told that they were healed. After the meeting they both fell down the steps breaking

iii) To **instruct the observers**.

In each period the miracles had an impact on those who saw them:

- 1) **Moses: Pharaoh** (and the world) were taught the powerlessness of Egypt's gods, and the reality and power of Jehovah (Exodus 5:2; 9:27, 28; 10:16,17), when each miracle plague defeated an Egyptian god. **Lesson:** "Let my people go."
- 2) **Elijah: Ahab, Jezebel and Israel** were taught the powerlessness of Baal worship, and the need to turn to Jehovah (1 Kings 18:36-39), when the 450 prophets of Baal failed the fire test and were killed.
- 3) **Christ:** Taught **His disciples and Israel**, by His miracles that He was Israel's Messiah and God. (Matthew 8:26).
- 4) **Apostles:** Their miracles taught Israel and the church to honour and believe their authority (Acts 5:11-13), to accept the offer of salvation, the Kingdom, and the church.

f) **The Passing of Miracles in Scripture.**

i) **Gifts of miracles in the first century, and general miracles today.**

Those with the gift of miracles could perform any miracle any day at will ("the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets." 1 Corinthians 14:32). The gift has fulfilled its purpose and is gone. God still works miracles today in response to faith.

ii) **When the purpose of miracles was fulfilled, the gift ended.**

Until the Bible was completed, God often used miracles to authenticate a man's ministry and message as from God. Once the Bible was completed, the same need did not exist. This age is not an age of miraculous signs, but of spiritual power to convert sinners, and to build up believers. A gift of miracles implies a continued ability to do miracles again and again. No one has this gift today. The signs in Mark 16:17,18 are illustrated in Acts, the purpose being that of confirming the word (as from God) with signs following.

Question: Do people today raise the dead, call fire from heaven, walk on water, multiply loaves, fishes, oil, etc.? No. Never.

Answer: These were authenticating signs, and God has proven the reliability of the messengers and the message. Hence there is no longer any need for signs or miracles. The miraculous proofs of the gospel in Hebrews 2:3,4 are all in the **past tense**.

Today, the **test of a man's authority** is not his ability to work miracles. His authority comes from **how faithfully he adheres to the Word of God**. O.T. and N.T. miracles never lasted more than 70 years. N.T. miracles covered the lifetime of Christ and the Apostles, and then they ceased. They were done once, that they might be believed always.

iii) **The seeking of miracles is not a sign of spirituality.**

Jesus Christ says: "an evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign." Matthew 12:39. Rather than glorifying God, sign-seeking detracts from faith in the Bible alone.

Charismatics try to prove the Bible by "miraculous" external evidence. When the miracles don't come, or are proven false, does this disprove the Bible? No way, yet this is the logical conclusion to where the Charismatic signs movement leads us.

iv) **Miracles are not the ultimate proof of truth.**

Jesus emphasized this in Matthew 7:21-23, when supposed miracle workers are cast into hell. The Bible warns us in 2 Thessalonians 2:8-12 of a rise in the miraculous as a means of satanic deception in the last days. All miraculous power spoken of in the Bible does not originate with God.

Note: Revelation 13:13-15 "He doeth great wonders, so that he makes fire come down from heaven." Scripture alone keeps us from the serpent's bite, and the deceiver's snare.

8. **TONGUES.** "divers kinds of tongues." (1 Corinthians 12:10).

a) **What is meant by tongues?**

Tongues are human languages that are understandable and known.

i) **3 Bible words for tongues:**

- 1) **Glossa** refers to the **organ** of the body, eg. Acts 2:3 "cloven tongues of fire" and **language** knowable in common conversation.
- 2) **Dialektos** = the language or dialect of a country or district. Visitors to Jerusalem heard their own dialect (Acts 1:19; 2:8).
- 3) **Heteroglossa** = tongue of a different language (1 Corinthians 14:21). All three may be unknown to the speaker, but known to the hearer. It is an unlearned language, a gift of the Holy Spirit.

ii) **Tongues at Jerusalem at Pentecost.**

"Glossa" is used in Acts 2:4,11 and "*dialektos*" in Acts 2:6, 8.

In Acts 2:1-11 note that:

- languages spoken were known;
- no interpretation was needed;
- they were so well spoken that the dialect was correct.

iii) **Tongues at Caesarea** (Cornelius in Acts 10:46) and **Ephesus** (19:6).

"Glossa" is used in Acts 10:46 and 19:6 denoting a knowable, translatable, human language just as in Acts 2. It was no different from Pentecost. Note "the **like** gift," Acts 11:17.

iv) **Tongues at Corinth.**

"Glossa" is used 21 times to describe tongues at Corinth.

"Heteroglossa" is used only once in 1 Corinthians 14:21 to describe the actual language of Assyrian foreign invaders (Isaiah 28:11,12). None of tongues were **gibberish** (as is today in the Charismatic Movement), but were definite, translatable, human languages.

v) **Is the Baptism in Holy Spirit the same as speaking in tongues?** No!

Charismatic Kenneth Hagin wrongly says: "Speaking in tongues is always manifested when people are baptized in the Holy Ghost."

Pentecostalist Donald Gee wrongly says: "The distinctive doctrine of the Pentecostal churches is that speaking with tongues is the "initial evidence" of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit."

Question: What is the "Baptism in the Holy Ghost" according to the Bible?

Answer: a) It is an historic event **predicted** by Christ in Matthew 3:13, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16, John 1:33 and Acts 1:4,5.

- 1) **It is an historic event** occurring on the day of Pentecost. Acts 11:15-17 and 1 Cor. 12:13.
- 2) Paul points **back to Pentecost**, the day the Holy Spirit came to indwell all believers. When somebody is saved today he is baptised in the Holy Spirit.

“For by one Spirit are we **all baptised** into one body, ... and have been **all** made to drink into one Spirit.” 1 Corinthians 12:13.

It is a definite act in the past in which every believer has participated at the moment of salvation. It does not occur **after** salvation, but **at** salvation.

vi) The Bible asks a series of questions in 1 Corinthians 12:30.

“Do **all** speak with tongues? do **all** interpret?”

Key: The answer to these is obviously “No.” “**All**” do not speak with tongues, yet “**all**” have been baptised in the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13). Therefore Baptism in the Holy Spirit is not initially evidenced by the gift of tongues, nor is it involved at all.

vii) Tongues were given to a select band of first century believers.

The **Bible never urges believers to pray for the gift of tongues.**

b) **Regulation of the gift of tongues.** What rules does Paul impose?

i) **Tongues are inferior.** Tongues comes at the end of gift lists in 1 Cor 12:8-10 and 12:28-30.

ii) **No more than 2 or 3 people were permitted to speak in tongues at church.**

“If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret.” 1 Corinthians 14:27.

This limits the number who may speak in tongues in the church meeting. It insured against the danger of having an inferior gift monopolize the limited time.

iii) **They must speak one at a time, not all together.** “and that by course”.

iv) **Tongues must be interpreted.** “let one interpret.” 1 Corinthians 14:27.

“Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret.” 14:13.

v) **If there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church.** v.28.

Tongues were to be planned. One had to first check to see if an interpreter was present. Then they had to limit tongues to three, and they had to decide who was going to speak first, second and third. It was not just unplanned as it happens today.

If he could keep silence, tongues could be easily controlled by the speaker.

Without an interpreter tongues were useless to the church. He was to speak to himself and to God. How could he himself be edified if he did not know what he was saying? (1 Cor. 14:2,14). God could understand him in his own language, so why speak in tongues?

vi) **Only men could speak in tongues, not women.**

“If any **man** speak in an unknown tongue.” 1 Corinthians 14:27.

“Let your **women** keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak”

(1 Corinthians 14:34). This forbids tongues by women in the assembly.

Question: But doesn't 1 Corinthians 11:5 contradict this verse:

“any **woman** who **prays** or **prophesies** with her head unveiled dishonoureth her head.”

Answer: This would be women praying with, prophesying, proclaiming or teaching to ladies or children, but not to men. (1 Timothy 2:12).

vii) **Only use tongues when unbelieving Jews were present.**

Since tongues were a warning sign of judgment to come on unbelieving Jews as 1 Cor. 14:21,22 states, then unbelieving Jews should be present for this gift to be used, so as not to create chaos (14:23) by Gentile unbelievers thinking you are

mad. Because of this, their use was limited. Only when unbelieving Jews were present were tongues to be used.

viii) **Tongues must edify others, not yourself.**

“...greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive **edifying**.” 1 Corinthians 14:5.

“Now brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, **what shall I profit you**, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?” 1 Corinthians 14:6.

“Seek that ye may excel to the **edifying** of the church.” 1 Corinthians 14:12.

“let all things be done unto **edifying**.” 1 Corinthians 14:26.

Edifying is the theme of 1 Corinthians 14. Whatever is done must edify others.

“He that speaketh in an unknown tongue, **edifieth himself**.” 1 Corinthians 14:4.

Note: The irony is clear. **Selfishness** edifies self, **selflessness** edifies others.

If tongues do not edify others, they should not be used. This verse is a criticism of the Corinthians wrong use of uninterpreted tongues, yet Charismatics use it to allow tongues in private.

ix) **Let all things be done decently and in order.** 1 Corinthians 14:40.

In their unconverted days, these Corinthians were “Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols.” 1 Corinthians 12:2.

They had been heathen idol worshippers out of control in emotional hysteria as a sign of being in touch with their gods. Now they were to wait their turn, only one speak at a time, and no more than three speak in tongues in one meeting.

x) **Forbid not to speak in tongues.** 1 Corinthians 14:39.

Tongues speakers point to this verse as their badge of freedom that no one should forbid tongues. Many non-tongues speakers are confused by this verse, so they permit tongues.

Answer: Place this verse in the first century context when tongues were given. When the purpose for tongues was **still valid**, one must not forbid the **right use** of tongues.

Today we can forbid to speak in tongues because:

1) Most tongues today are **gibberish**, and not real languages

2) Most tongues today are **not the right use**, and not true to these rules.

3) Since the **purpose** of tongues has been **fulfilled** of warning unbelieving Jews to repent (70AD), then we can forbid what is an unbiblical, obsolete gift.

In the time of Paul's letter being written (57AD), tongues were still needed and practised. The day of their demise had not yet come.

Note: Today, we should forbid tongues as an unbiblical practice.

c) **Reason for the gift of tongues.**

Very few people are willing to study the Bible to discover the purpose for tongues. Most speak in tongues today because someone asks them to.

There is only one primary Bible reason for tongues:

TO WARN FIRST CENTURY UNBELIEVING JEWS OF JUDGMENT TO COME

14:20 “...Be not children in understanding, ...but in understanding be men.”

When the Corinthians truly understood the reason for tongues, they would move from childhood to adulthood in their understanding, and from the selfishness of childhood to the selflessness of manhood.

“With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord” (1 Corinthians 14:21) is God’s warning sign to unbelieving Jews of Isaiah’s day as it is quoted from Isaiah 28:11,12.

Paul quotes this verse (1 Corinthians 14:22) as a warning of God to unbelieving Jews of the first century, “**Wherefore** tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that **believe not...**” **Note:** “**Wherefore**” links what Paul says in v.21 with the conclusion of v.22, which is the reason or purpose for tongues to warn Jews who believe not, of impending judgment.

If this is the reason for tongues, it should be verified in Acts, and it is in the following ways:

a) **Acts 2:1-13.** According to v.5 the people to whom languages were spoken at Pentecost were **unbelieving Jews** from other countries as seen from v.22,23, and by their cry of v.37. “What shall we do?” Thus, as Isaiah predicted, God spoke to “this people” through men using other languages, and the tongues were heard in their “own dialect wherein they were born.” (v.8).

b) **Acts 8:1-18. Question:** Why were there **no tongues** spoken when the Samaritans received the Holy Ghost by Peter and John laying hands on them?

Answer: Because there were no Jews present at Samaria. Jews hated Samaritans and would not be caught dead living at Samaria.

Question: Why could Philip **not impart the** Holy Spirit by laying on of hands?

Answer: Because he was not an apostle, and God wanted the Samaritan believers to be associated with the apostles. This shows that if Philip could not impart the Holy Spirit by laying on of hands, nor can we do it today. This refutes “slaying in the spirit.”

c) **Acts 10:44-48.**

Question: Why did Cornelius’ household, who were Gentiles, speak in tongues when they were not Jews.

Answer: Unbelieving Jews were present, who still thought that God only dealt with Jews alone and not with Gentiles. These Jews and Jews at Jerusalem needed convincing that God’s dealings were shifting from unbelieving Judaism which was under impending judgment to include Gentiles in the church.

“Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.” Acts 11:18.

Hence tongues spoken by Cornelius’ household convinced the Jews of God accepting Gentiles into the church.

d) **Acts 19:1-9.** John the Baptist’s twelve disciples at Ephesus were saved, baptised, Paul laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, then they spoke with tongues.

--Tongues warned the large Jewish community at Ephesus of judgment to come.

--Tongues also identified John’s disciples at Ephesus with Pentecost and the Apostles.

e) **Acts 18** and **1 Corinthians 12-14.** Tongues as a warning to Jews of coming judgment was relevant for the large Jewish community at Corinth who understood them (i.e.: as at Pentecost).

Because Gentiles were present at the Corinthian church who did not understand the languages, the tongues had to be interpreted lest they say “that ye are mad.” (v.23). Thus when no interpreter was present, there was to be no speaking in tongues. Hence the primary purpose of tongues was God warning the Jews to repent and believe or be judged.

The following chart summarizes the occurrences of tongues with Jews:

(See **Answers** book, Chapter 99, page 480)

9. INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES. 1 Corinthians 12:10,30; 14:5,13,26,27,28.

a) **Definition:**

- 1) It is **not** the learned ability to translate from one language to another.
- 2) It is the **supernatural ability to translate** the meaning of the tongues speaker, who was using a language unknown to the people in the church assembly.
- 3) In 1 Corinthians 12:10 and 14:26 the Greek word is “hermeneia” meaning “to explain, or interpret” the words spoken in a tongue.
- 4) In 1 Corinthians 12:30 and 14:6,13,27,28 the Greek word has “dia” (through) at the start of the word, which adds intensity, meaning “to interpret fully, to explain thoroughly.”

b) **The Purpose of Interpretation** is to edify the church.

Tongues of themselves do not edify, unless interpreted. The tongues gift was incomplete without interpretation, which allowed people to understand what was said.

c) **Paul regulates tongues: If no Interpreter is present, then no tongues are to be spoken.**

At Pentecost there was no need for tongues to be interpreted, since these people heard what was spoken directly in their own language.

In Corinth the situation was different. Tongues did not occur in the open air, but in the church assembly. The gift of interpretation of tongues was very important to Gentiles in the assembly.

“If there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church.” 1 Corinthians 14:28.

The interpreter avoided the charge of madness (v.23), and fulfilled the need for edification (v.26). Interpreters were well known, and tongues could be avoided if the interpreter was absent.

c) **When did Interpretation of tongues cease?** Interpreting ceased when tongues ceased in 70AD, when its purpose was fulfilled. Both gifts ceased together. W. Criswell records this:

A seminary graduate who had majored in Hebrew attended a tongues-meeting in California: In the midst of the meeting he stood up and quoted by memory the first Psalm in the original language. After he had finished, the interpreter arose and solemnly, piously made known in plain English what the brother had spoken in an unknown tongue. The interpreter made it an utterance, Spirit-inspired, about women prophesying in church. When the seminarian made known what he had done and what he had said, pandemonium broke loose. (7:219).

When people insist in using gifts which the Bible says are obsolete, much confusion can arise.

IV. BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT.

12:13 What the Baptism in the Holy Spirit is, and what the Baptism in the Holy Spirit is not.

What the Baptism with the Holy Spirit is **NOT**:

- i) It is NOT a repeat experience. 1 Corinthians 12:3.
At conversion we are baptized into the body of Christ, once and for all time.
- ii) It is NOT a subsequent experience to salvation.
- iii) It is NOT the same as the filling of the Holy Spirit.

What the Baptism of the Holy Spirit **IS**:

- i) New Testament Baptism in the Holy Spirit is a **one-off** event.
New Testament filling of the Holy Spirit is **continuous**. There are many fillings of the Holy Spirit, but only **one** Baptism of the Holy Spirit at salvation.
- ii) Baptism with the Holy Spirit is **never commanded** in the New Testament, but the filling with the Holy Spirit **is commanded** in Ephesians 5:18. "Be filled with the Spirit." "Filled" is in the imperative mood of command. "**Baptism of the Holy Spirit**" is **never** found in New Testament.
We are never told to seek, tarry or pray for the Baptism with the Holy Spirit.
- iii) The Baptism is **positional**, the filling is the experimental inflow of Divine power, affecting how we live, how we witness, and all we do for Christ.
- iv) It is **NOT** for some believers only, but for **all believers**.
I Corinthians 12:13 says that **ALL** members of the Corinthian church who were saved were baptised with the Holy Spirit, though **ALL** did **NOT** speak with tongues.
- v) It is **NOT** an answer to **agonizing prayer**.
Many believe in "tarrying for the Holy Spirit", quoting Christ's words to His disciples in Luke 24:49, "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but **tarry** ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."
This verse was for the disciples in pre-Pentecost days, as was Acts 1:4,5.
John 7:39 explains this time period as "the Holy Ghost was not yet given." These instructions were specifically for the disciples (Acts 1:13-15) during the 10 days between the ascension of Christ, and the descending of the promised Holy Spirit.
To one lady who had just returned from a tarrying meeting, Harry Ironside said: "You are 10,000 miles too far away, and 1900 years too late."
Tarrying was for 10 days before Pentecost, at Jerusalem in 33 AD.

vi) What the Baptism with the Holy Spirit **IS**.

It is mentioned only seven times in the New Testament.
"He shall baptise you **with** the Holy Ghost." Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16.
"Ye shall be baptised **with** the Holy Ghost." Acts 1:5.
"Ye shall be baptised **with** the Holy Ghost." Acts 11:16.
"So many of us as were baptised **into** Jesus Christ, were baptised **into** His death." Romans 6:3.
"For as many of you as have been **baptised into** Christ have put on Christ." Galatians 3:27.
"For by one Spirit are we **all baptised into one body**, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been **all** made to drink **into** one Spirit." 1 Corinthians 12:13.

1. It is baptism **in** the Holy Spirit.
Baptism marks an initial experience. We are immersed in the Holy Spirit as we are immersed in water.
"**by** (Greek: en) one Spirit...". "En" is Greek for "in".
2. It is the **work of Jesus Christ**.
In Spirit baptism, the element is the Holy Spirit (as water is the element in water baptism), but **the baptiser is Jesus Christ** (Matthew 3:11, "He shall baptise you **with** the Holy Spirit.")
The Holy Spirit does **not** do the baptising. Christ is the Baptiser, who baptises us into His body with the Holy Spirit. Thus the baptism **with** the Holy Spirit, whether we are referring to Pentecost, or to the application of Pentecost to the newly regenerated soul at conversion, is the work of Christ Himself.

3. It is **linked to the local church**.

Question: What body are we baptised into in 1 Corinthians 12:13?

Answer: "Now **ye** are the body of Christ, and members in particular." 1 Corinthians 12:27.

Fundamental to Spirit baptism is membership in a local "body of Christ". To emphasize the baptism while at the same time downgrading membership in a local church is a contradiction in terms.

Charismatic prayer groups where Spirit baptism is sought, by-pass the authority of the local church, and the Word of God. Charismatics claim that when one receives the baptism he will speak in tongues as the initial evidence of Spirit baptism.

The **gifts** named in Mark 16:17,18 are **associated** with **belief in Christ**, not with Spirit baptism as a second experience.

Charismatic teachers all agree that you need the Spirit baptism, but they are **not agreed on how you get it**. eg. Some suggest prayer, obedience, repentance, sinlessness, yielding, tarrying, faith, etc. They talk much about the rest of this gift. Charismatic writer Robert Dalton expresses the effort required to receive this free gift of grace of Spirit baptism, "This experience ... is for all who desire it and are willing to pay the price."

If you pay the price to get a gift, it is not a free gift!

When a Charismatic asks us: "Have you had the baptism **OF** the Holy Spirit?" our first answer can be, "There is no such thing as the baptism **OF** the Holy Spirit. If you mean the baptism **WITH** the Holy Spirit, yes I have, and so has every other Christian." The baptism **OF** the Holy Spirit appears nowhere in Scripture, as the Holy Spirit does not do the baptizing, it is Christ doing it. Spiritual immersion, not water immersion is the subject of 1 Corinthians 12:13, Romans 6:3-5, and Galatians 3:27.

When Charismatics insist that there is a second experience to be called the baptism **OF** the Holy Spirit, they are actually **redefining the doctrine of salvation**. They are saying that **salvation doesn't really give us everything that we think it gave us, that we are still lacking, that we need something more**.

Nowhere in the Bible are Christians commanded to seek, or to receive the Holy Spirit or to be baptized "by" or "of" the Spirit.

The Bible doesn't tell us how to get the baptism of the Holy Spirit, but it tells us that we already have been baptized in the Spirit when we believed.

"And ye are **complete in Him**..." Colossians 2:10.

"His divine power **hath given unto us all things** that pertain unto life and **godliness**, through the **knowledge of Him** that hath called us to glory and virtue." 2 Peter 1:3.

Since we are "complete in Christ", and "we have been given all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Christ", **there is no point in seeking what is already ours**.

The Bible never teaches us to get with a group of people who can teach us how to speak in tongues. All we need to do is **yield to the Holy Spirit**, who is already there, **then we will have the Spirit's power**.

As **Saviour**, Christ baptizes with the Holy Spirit, and as **Judge**, He baptizes with fire. The baptism with fire is the judgment of hell, burning the chaff with unquenchable fire (Matthew

3:11). It is not the Holy Spirit's baptism, but Christ's baptism **with** the Holy Spirit that places us into the body of Christ when we receive Christ as Saviour. All believers have this. We must not seek, or ask for that which we already possess. At salvation we are baptized in the Holy Spirit, as well as being sealed, indwelt, filled and regenerated.

Key: A person cannot enjoy what he has if he is forever seeking a non-existent second blessing. What is lacking is people's full obedience, full trust and full submission, not Christ's full salvation, indwelling or second blessing.

V. BELIEVERS WHO THOUGHT that they were SUPERIOR and OTHERS INFERIOR.

12:14-16: "For the body is not one member, (eg. tongue) but many."

The Tongues Movement, by saying that all believers should speak in tongues, says that the entire body should be a tongue (or have a tongue in it), which is false. Verse 14 refutes this by saying that the body is not one member (tongue), but many members, each with their own, but different function.

The Corinthian church was **divided** where it should have been united (eg. each following different leaders, whereas they all should have one leader, Christ). They **tried to be uniform**, in all seeking to have the showy gifts like tongues, where they should have been diverse in each being content to use their own God given gifts.

Many were unhappy and discontent with their gifts, envying someone else's gifts.

The **foot** or **ear** represented believers who had developed an inferiority complex, perhaps because they had "behind-the-scenes" gifts like helps or mercy, etc. They felt inferior and useless because they were not given gifts like brothers **Hand** and **Eye** with the gift of tongues or interpretation of tongues.

Apparently, brothers **Hand** and **Eye**, being proud of their gifts, approached brothers **Foot** and **Ear** one day saying: "Unless you two can speak in tongues as we do, you are not spiritual; you will never make it in the Christian life. Quite possibly, you are not even saved."

In great distress, brother **Foot** tried hard to become a Hand, and brother **Ear** tried hard to become an **Eye**. They may have prayed, fasted, and tarried, but to their dismay, each remained a **Foot** and an **Ear**. Once a foot, always a foot. Once an ear, always an ear. Why? Because this was the gift the Holy Spirit chose to give them. It could not be changed by human effort.

12:17 "If the whole body were an **eye**, where were the **hearing**." Common sense should have told them, that as a church, they could get the job done better by each performing different ministries. If everyone spoke in tongues who would do the teaching? The church would become grotesque if it consisted of only one gift. Gifts can only function properly when you are filled with the Holy Spirit.

12:18,19 "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him." And if they were all one member, where were the body?"

God allocates gifts to each believer as God sees fit.

By being discontent and wanting gifts that they did not have, the Corinthians insulted God's wisdom and goodness by saying that God had made a mistake.

By Charismatics saying that all must speak in tongues, they are contradicting God's giving of gifts as He sees fit.

For the body to perform all its functions, many different parts must all work together. So it is in a church. If most of a church is inactive, the active members must do work for which they are not equipped.

There are two main reasons why some Christians never become involved in ministry:

- i) **12:15-17.** Some (like Foot and Ear) feel that they have no gifts or abilities that are worthwhile, so they rest and let others do all the work. These have an inferiority complex, saying: "**They don't need me.**"
- ii) **12:18-21.** Others feel that they are so highly qualified that they do not really need the help of others to perform their ministry. These are the believers described in v.21, and counselled in v.22-31. Their attitude is, "**I don't need them.**"

12:21 "The **eye** cannot say unto the **hand**, I have no need of thee: nor again the **head** to the feet, I have no need of you." (v.21).

God has made all of His creation interdependent, and so He has made members of a church interdependent. Several prominent and gifted members carried on their ministries as if they were self-sufficient. They disdained the less significant members.

12:22 "Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be **more feeble**, are **necessary**:" Weaker, more feeble members of the body are necessary, such as heart, lungs, kidneys, etc.

These members are hidden, performing their work in secret, not being seen publicly, and are necessary to our survival. If we lose a prominent part like an arm or leg or eye, we can still live. But if we lose our heart, lung, or kidneys we will quickly die. The less noticed parts (internal organs) seem to be weaker than the rest of the body such as limbs (external organs).

The hidden, weaker, internal organs are more necessary to our survival. Therefore, internal organs are more closely protected by the skeleton. They are more vulnerable, more necessary to our survival, and are therefore given more protection. You can live without legs, but you can't live without lungs.

Application and lesson: The most important ministries in a church always include some that are not obvious, such as prayer warriors providing spiritual power, or behind-the-scenes helpers. The Corinthian church failed to appreciate those having behind-the-scenes gifts. They magnified the showy gifts such as prophecy, tongues, healing, etc., which is just what the Charismatic Movement does today.

12:23 "And those members of the body, which we think to be **less honourable**, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our **uncomely parts** have more abundant comeliness."

"Less honourable" refers to private parts of the body such as thighs, waist, abdomen, buttocks, and chest. On these we bestow honour, meaning that we put attractive clothing on these parts, compared to the more presentable parts such as face and hands, which need no clothing.

"Uncomely" (Greek, "aschemon") means shameful, indecent, unpresentable or private parts needing to be covered. When people treat their uncomely parts with care and modesty, they come to have more abundant comeliness.

Application: A well known Christian with a prominent gift (like a face or hand), ought not to seek great honour for himself, but he should seek to help the well-being of those with less obvious gifts. Specially gifted Christians in leadership or prominence, should not look down

on those with less noticeable gifts, but should care for and protect them, and “comfort the feeble-minded (fainthearted), support the weak, be patient toward all men.” 1 Thessalonians 5:14.

12:24 “For our **comely parts** have no need,” means that the more beautiful parts of the body need no special help.

Application: Those believers with more noticeable and attractive gifts are the **comely** members who have no need of encouragement and protection. Honour comes to them naturally (as the face), and that honour they should share with members whose gifts are less attractive. Spiritual greatness is determined by the spirit of servanthood, not by high position.

“God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked.” God rewards people according to our attitudes as well as to how we use our gifts.

12:25 “That there should be **no schism** in the body; but that the members should have the **same care** one for another.”

God wants to avoid schism (or division) in the body, by everybody giving mutual support and encouragement. In ours and in God’s eyes, every believer should be regarded as highly important. God wants every church member to have the same care for each other. We should care just as much for the rough new convert and each Sunday school teacher as the Pastor.

12:26 “And whether one member **suffer**, all the members **suffer** with it; or one member be **honoured**, all the members **rejoice** with it.”

The one who suffers is consoled, and the one who is honoured is rejoiced with. Only strong mutual love and concern can prevent or heal division and maintain unity in a church. There ought to be no envy, rivalry, competition, resentment, superiority or inferiority, only true Christian love.

12:27 “Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.”

Paul reminded them that as a group they were the body of Christ, as well as individually they were part of Christ’s body. They were one in Christ and should be united with each other.

12:28 “And God hath set some in the church, **first** (1) apostles, **secondarily** (2) prophets, **thirdly** (3) teachers, **after that** (4) miracles, then (5) gifts of healings, (6) helps, (7) governments, (8) diversities of tongues.”

There is a priority list of gifts, some having more significance than others. Numbering the gifts shows that the gifts are listed in order of importance. Apostles and prophets are mentioned first and second because the church is built on them. (Ephesians 2:20).

Tongues are last showing their least importance.

12:29,30 “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?”

Note:

1) Each question strongly implies the answer “No”, not all speak with tongues, etc. Charismatics contradict this verse when they say that all should speak with tongues.

2) “**All**” is mentioned seven times, and in each case the Greek word “pantes” which is the **masculine** gender is used. This means that only men had the office of apostle, prophet and teacher. Only men, and not women worked miracles, had gifts of healing, only men spoke with tongues and only men interpreted. The feminine of “**all**” is “pasai” in Greek used in Matthew 27:5,7 “then all (pasai) those virgins.”

3) **Only men spoke in tongues** as seen in 1 Corinthians 14:27. “If any **man** speak in a tongue... if there be no interpreter, let **him** keep silence in the church; and let **him** speak to **himself** and to God.”

4) “Let your **women** keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak ... for it is a **shame for women to speak in the church**.” 1 Corinthians 14:34,35. Charismatic women do not obey these verses, and their menfolk encourage their disobedience.

12:31 “But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way.” Paul was commanding the **church as a whole** to appreciate those people with the best gifts, because most of them appreciated wrongly the least gifts. Paul was saying, “appreciate the apostles, prophets, teachers. Desire to have people in your assembly using these gifts.”

Question: On the surface some think that he is saying that if you haven’t got certain gifts, then seek them.

Answer: This cannot be right because it contradicts the many statements that God is the One who distributes gifts, not man. eg. 1 Corinthians 12:8,11,18,28.

Then Paul shows us the more excellent way of love.

Covet = “zeloo” in Greek which means “to be ardently devoted to.”

It is in the second person plural, and is therefore addressed to the entire church. Paul is saying: “Whenever you meet, you should always desire that the best spiritual gifts be used (ie. teaching) but not tongues, which was the least gift. Since tongues was the lowest and least desirable gift, they were never to covet tongues. In the light of these clear Bible passages, it is inconceivable that 21st Century Christians should seek to obtain a **gift that no longer exists**, and one that was **inferior** even while it was operational.

(for exposition of 1 Corinthians 13, see “Answers” Chapter 71, p.321 and Chapter 100, p.482)