

June, 16, 2019

Session 9: The Spiritual Gifts

Previously: We were looking at godly love and godly charity. We have already seen that we will be introduced to five components of godly love in Romans 12 and 13.

Following that, we were about to read in I Corinthians 13 which is all about godly charity.

Charity is the motive for our actions toward others. We defined “charity” as “the mental attitude of our valuing and esteeming of other members of the body of Christ.” Godly love is when our attitude is manifested by our Christ-like actions toward them.

But before we read I Corinthians 13, I wanted us to have a context for what we will be reading so we back to the end of chapter 12, which set forth the spiritual gifts which were in operation at the start of this DoGG.

1 Corinthians 12:28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

We learned:

- These gifts are listed:
 - in order of importance and
 - in order of their appearance
- The most important gift and the first gift to be put into operation was the gift of an apostle
- The word “apostle” means a “one sent forth.”
- What did an apostle do? As we see in the book of Acts, an apostle would come into an area and preach the gospel.
- As people came to faith in Jesus Christ, the apostle would organize them into a local assembly.
- The apostle would begin to instruct them in the foundational doctrines of the faith.

Therefore, the operation God desired to accomplish in this world by means of the gift of an apostle was the establishment of local churches.

If they responded positively and properly to those initial doctrines, then the gift of a prophet would show up in the assembly.

- Don’t think of a prophet as one who foretells the future, but think of him as one who speaks for God.

OED: 1) One who speaks for God. (The Greek word for prophet was originally the spokesman or interpreter of a divinity)

- Since there was no written word back then by which to instruct, it was the job of the prophet to reveal additional truths from God.
- After the prophet had taught the initial doctrines, the next stage of doctrine would begin to be revealed to the assembly by the prophet.
- The prophets in the assembly were the ones who were able to discern which writings were inspired scripture and which were not. Those identified as scripture were copied and sent out to other assemblies.

Ephesians 3:1 For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, 2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: 3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (**as I wrote afore in few words,** 4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)

1 Thessalonians 2:13 For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, **ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God**, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

Colossians 4:16 And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the *epistle* from Laodicea.



1 Thessalonians 5:27 I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.

The operation which God wanted to accomplish in this world by the gift of the prophet was to provide for the word of truth.

The next most important gift was the gift of the teacher and it was the third gift to show up in the assembly.

- As the newly organized church:
 - responded to the initial doctrine of the apostle, and
 - began to be exposed to additional doctrine from the prophet
 - there was a need for someone who could teach the word so it could be understood, believed and acted upon

The operation of God that was meant to be accomplished by the gift of teaching was the edification of the believers. There is a sense in which all three of these offices are working in concert so that godly edification could take place.

So, do you see the progression?

- God would send an apostle (a preacher).
- He would preach the gospel.
- Of those who heard the gospel, some would respond.
- The prophet would organize them into a church and begin teaching them foundational doctrine.
- As they responded, the prophet would reveal more doctrinal truth.
- Then a teacher would guide them into an understanding of the words of the Lord so they would understand what they were supposed to do with it; what those words were designed to accomplish in them.

These first three gifts are all centered in God's word. But the next gift is not grouped with these. This is evident by the phrase, "after that."

1 Corinthians 12:28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, **after that miracles**, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

The "after that" not only sets off the two categories of gifts, but it also serves as a chronological indicator for the order in which the gifts came into operation.

If we do not understand the operations of God, we will never understand why the written word of God is the more excellent way and we will never understand why God stopped the miracles.

Romans 15:14 And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.

15 Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God, ¹⁶ That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, **that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.** ¹⁷ I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God. ¹⁸ For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, **to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed,** ¹⁹ **Through mighty signs and wonders,** by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

Pay attention to verses 16 and 18 where Paul talks about him being the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles and ministering the “gospel of God” to them, and causing the Gentiles to obey that gospel by “word” (things Paul said) and “deed” (things Paul did in their sight.)

In a nutshell, when God separated Paul and called him to be the apostle to the Gentiles, God was now dealing directly with Gentiles for the first time in over 2000 years.

Think about it: From the tower of Babel when God confounded the languages to the birth of Abraham is just over 200 years.

Abram enters the land when he is seventy-five years old, so from the tower of Babel to the Abrahamic Covenant is just over 275 years.

Genesis 12:1 Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: 2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: ³ And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. ⁴ So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram *was* **seventy and five years old** when he departed out of Haran.

Isaac is born when Abram is 100 years old.

Genesis 21:5 And Abraham was **an hundred years old**, when his son Isaac was born unto him.

Isaac is 60 years old when Jacob is born.

Genesis 25:26 And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel; and his name was called Jacob: and **Isaac was threescore years old** when she bare them.

When Jacob enters the land of Egypt, he is 130 years old.

Genesis 47:1 Then Joseph came and told Pharaoh, and said, My father and my brethren, and their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have, are come out of the land of Canaan; and, behold, they *are* in the land of Goshen. ² And he took some of his brethren, *even* five men, and presented them unto Pharaoh. ³ And Pharaoh said unto his brethren, What *is* your occupation? And they said unto Pharaoh, Thy servants *are* shepherds, both we, *and* also our fathers. ⁴ They said moreover unto Pharaoh, For to sojourn in the land are we come; for thy servants have no pasture for their flocks; for the famine *is* sore in the land of Canaan: now therefore, we pray thee, let thy servants dwell in the land of Goshen. ⁵ And Pharaoh spake unto Joseph, saying, Thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee: ⁶ The land of Egypt *is* before thee; in the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell; in the land of Goshen let them dwell: and if thou knowest *any* men of activity among them, then make them rulers over my cattle. ⁷ And Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh: and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. ⁸ And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How old *art* thou? ⁹ And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, **The days of the years of my pilgrimage *are* an hundred and thirty years:** few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage.

So, when we total it all up, we have 215+100+60+130=505 years from the Tower of Babel to the sojourn in Egypt.

Israel was in Egypt for 430 years.

Exodus 12:40 Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, *was* **four hundred and thirty years.**

That brings the total to 935 years.

From the Exodus to Solomon's building of the temple was 479 years.

1 Kings 6:1 And it came to pass **in the four hundred and eightieth year** after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Zif, which *is* the second month, that he began to build the house of the LORD.

That brings the total to 1415 years.

Solomon reigned in Israel for 40 years.

1 Kings 11:42 And the time that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel *was* forty years.

But since the temple was built until the fourth year of his reign, we add 37 to the total bringing it to 1452.

From the death of Solomon to the Temple being destroyed by Babylon was 389 years. That makes the total 1841.

The rebuilding of the Temple was completed at the end of the 70 years of desolations, in the 6th year of Darius, the Mede, so that adds 70+ years to the total. The total now being 1911.

Ezra 6:15 And this house was finished on the third day of the month Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king.

From the rebuilding of the Temple to the 20th year of Artaxerxes' reign was 62 years. Total = 1973 years.

From the 20th year of Artaxerxes reign to the Cross is 483 years or 69 weeks of Daniel's prophecy.

From the cross to Acts 7 is 1 more year, bringing the total to: 2457 years. We went through all of that to demonstrate just how long it had been since God was working with Gentiles.

In this DoGG, God wants to offer up the Gentiles to Himself and does so by the "sanctifying of the Holy Ghost." That means the Gentiles which respond to the gospel in this DoGG were being "set apart" unto God.

Paul would come into an area, preach the gospel, organize them into a church, instruct them in basic doctrine and when he left, there were those in the assembly who had the spiritual gifts and were operating out of them. At that time, Paul had those gifts and now we see that so did some in the assembly with the gift of miracles. And why did God put that as the fourth most important gift? Because there was an operation that God was performing by means of that gift. And what was that operation? What was God seeking to accomplish at that time?

Those "mighty signs and wonders" which were performed by those with the spiritual gift of miracles were the confirmation of the truth of Paul's message that:

- God has truly turned from Israel to the Gentiles
- there really is a DoGG
- that God really is offering up the Gentiles unto Himself.

The miracles confirmed Paul's ministry as legit and they worked as a proof to the Gentiles of Paul's message.

After Paul was left the area, doubts would, no doubt, set in. These miracles were the constant reminder of what God was now doing with them.

Compare these verses:

Romans 6:17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

That “form of doctrine” was Paul’s gospel message which the Gentiles heard and “obeyed from the heart.” That is the “word” of Romans 15:18.

Romans 15:18 For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, **to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed,**

And not only did Paul have a “word,” but he also had “deed” which was the mighty signs and wonders which were wrought by the Spirit of God through Paul. The Gentiles could see that God was “offering them up to Himself” which is another way of saying that God was truly now turned to the Gentiles and dealing with them apart from Israel.

Turn to Acts 14 to see an example of this.

Acts 14:1 And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed. 2 But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren. 3 Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands. 4 But the multitude of the city was divided: and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles.

Just as Paul’s custom was, he went first into the synagogue to preach. But you can see from verse 3 that after Paul was preaching “long time” his message was no longer only to the Jews, but now it is to the Gentiles as well. And when it was, God granted “signs and wonder” to be done by their hands. There is the “word” in the preaching and the “deed” in the miracles.

At this time, it is not only the Jews who are being impacted by the miracles; the Gentiles are also being impacted. This is the proof of Paul’s message to those Gentiles. The gift of miracles was to confirm the message of the dispensational change to Gentiles and once that was accomplished (the Gentiles had heard Paul’s message) there was no need to continue the gift.

1 Corinthians 12:4 Now there are **diversities of gifts**, but the same Spirit. 5 And there are **differences of administrations**, but the same Lord. 6 And **there are diversities of operations**, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

The “operation” was the purpose behind the gift; it was why the gift was given in the first place. **The operation (purpose) of the fourth gift was to confirm to the Gentiles that God was now turned to them** (for the first time in over 2000 years.)

That is why there needed to be a verification; this was not a common occurrence. The “operation of God” behind the gift of miracles was never just to do some neat things or prove what God can do. The gift of miracles operating in a Gentile church at the beginning of the DoGG was a confirmation of what God was now doing.

So think about where we are in the midst of this:

- An apostle comes into an area and preaches the gospel
- Some people respond
- The apostle organizes them into a church
- The prophet comes in to keep the word of God coming to them
- The teacher leads them in their edification from that word

At that point, what is the next thing this assembly should engage in?

They should, at that point, begin the work of the ministry. They should want to tell others the things they have believed. And as they do, they need someone in their midst who can supply undeniable proof that what they are saying is true...hence, the miracles.

The “healings” come next.

1 Corinthians 12:28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then **gifts of healings**, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

The miracles were for the Gentiles, but the healings were for the Jews.

In Romans 8, we were taught that sufferings, sickness, physical infirmities and things like that would be norm for us. God did not give the gifts of healing because He did not want us to suffer or feel pain. God did not give those gifts of healing because He did want us to be sick. The supernatural gifts of healings were not given because we are children of God and sickness has no claim on us. Those are all in people’s imaginations. Those were never the reasons behind any healing.

1 Corinthians 12:9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the **gifts of healing** by the same Spirit;

1 Corinthians 12:30 Have all the **gifts of healing**? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?

It is never the “gift” singular. It is always “gifts.” There is a specific operation of God being accomplished by the individual who had this spiritual ability.

There is another thing to notice here. In I Corinthians 12, miracles are one thing, but healings are another. At the same time I point out that difference, I need to say that any time a supernatural healing takes place, it is miraculous. Look at Acts 4.

Acts 4:22 For the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was shewed.

But in I Corinthians 12, Paul makes a difference between the gift miracles and some particular kinds of healings. And since they are listed differently, what do we know?

We know there is a different OPERATION God wants to accomplish through these healings.

The “gifts of healings” are referring to the ability to heal some particular kinds of infirmities.

Three times in Paul’s ministry, Paul goes to Jewish population centers outside of the land of Israel and preaches, they reject his message, and he announces he is going to the Gentiles. (Acts 13, 18, 28)

Acts 13:14 But when they departed from Perga, they came to **Antioch in Pisidia**, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down.

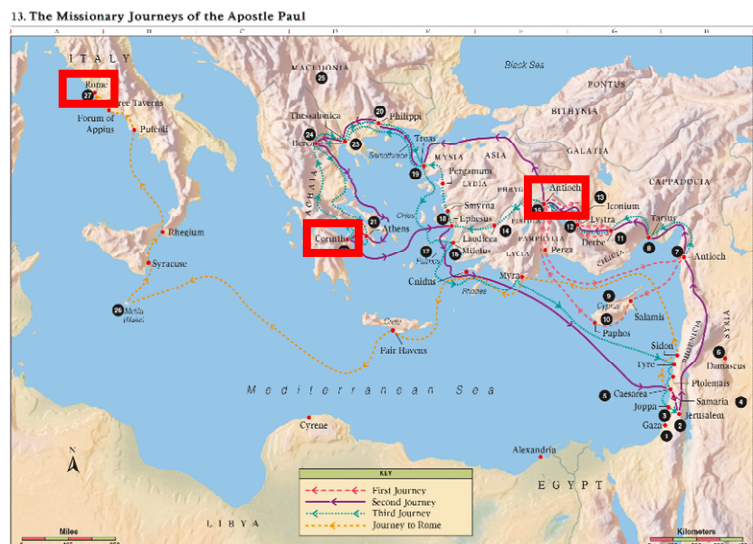
Acts 13:46 Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, **we turn to the Gentiles**.

Acts 18:1 After these things Paul departed from Athens, and **came to Corinth**;

Acts 18:6 And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook *his* raiment, and said unto them, Your blood *be* upon your own heads; I *am* clean: **from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles**.

Acts 28:16 And when we came **to Rome**, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him.

Acts 28:28 Be it known therefore unto you, that **the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles**, and *that* they will hear it. 29 And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves.



What are these? These are 3 major Jewish population centers OUTSIDE the land of Israel.

But to get back to the point, back in Deuteronomy 28, we see some things about diseases that God said would befall Israel when they were outside of their land. And there is the kicker; God said when they got these diseases outside of their land, they were not going to be healed from those diseases.

Or, let's say it this way, suppose you were a Jew, living outside the land of Israel, and you had contracted one of the diseases listed in your OT scriptures in Deuteronomy and you could by no means be healed of this disease. And then suppose along comes the apostle Paul and he preaching about the changes that God has made by turning from Israel and turning to the Gentiles. He talks about the interruption of the prophetic program. He talks about a dispensation of Gentile grace. He is preaching that anyone, Jew or Greek, can be justified unto eternal life by putting their faith in Jesus Christ as their all-sufficient Savior. And to substantiate that message, suppose that he healed you of your incurable disease.

Or suppose that long after Paul has left, the Gentile assembly in your town begins to publish the truth of what God is doing today (they are repeating Paul's message) and as a proof of the truth of their message, there is one among them who has the "gifts of healings" and that person heals you of your incurable disease. Are you likely to give them a hearing? I would say you would be much more likely after that experience. And that is the purpose of the gifts of healings.

Now, let's look at it in Deuteronomy 28. The context here is Moses talking to Israel about the consequences of their rebellion against God in connection with the prescribed punishments that accompanied the 5th course of punishment when they were taken captive out of their land.

Deuteronomy 28:27 The LORD will smite thee with the botch of Egypt, and with the emerods, and with the scab, and with the itch, **whereof thou canst not be healed.**

Deuteronomy 28:35 The LORD shall smite thee in the knees, and in the legs, with a sore botch **that cannot be healed**, from the sole of thy foot unto the top of thy head.

Deuteronomy 28:59 Then the LORD will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, *even* great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance. 60 Moreover he will **bring upon thee all the diseases of Egypt**, which thou wast afraid of; **and they shall cleave unto thee.** ⁶¹ Also every sickness, and every plague, which *is* not written in the book of this law, them will the LORD bring upon thee, until thou be destroyed.

They knew when they came down with the botch of Egypt, that all of their efforts to be healed would fail. They knew that these were the consequences of violating the law contract. These were "special infirmities." These were not the run of the mill variety of sicknesses. And if you notice, during the public ministry of Jesus, he never healed anyone of these special sicknesses.

He healed the lame, the blind and an assortment of other illnesses, but not these. He fulfilled Isaiah 35, but not these.

Isaiah 35:5 Then **the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. 6 Then shall the lame *man* leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing:** for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.

So, in the early stage of the DoGG, this spiritual gift was given to one in a Gentile assembly as a confirmation of what God was now doing in turning to the Gentiles. This was for the purpose of getting some Jews to put their faith in Jesus Christ, just like the miracles were for the purpose of getting some Gentiles to believe in Jesus. In other words, these were the gifts that help to grow the church.