

## Series on First Corinthians

By Doug Hamilton

### 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 The Big Hoax

There is a faction called the Charismatic Movement. Their leaders teach that the miracles which occurred in the first-century are still in place today. This lesson will test that theory.

- The Dictionary Definition of Miracle: An event that appears inexplicable by the laws of nature and so is held to be supernatural in origin or an act of God.
- The Gullible Definition of a Miracle: Blindly accepting something unexplained while refusing to look at a possible explanation.

When God chooses to heal a cancer patient through an oncologist, a medical staff, medicines and therapy, that brings with it an explanation. A true miracle would be to cure the same cancer patient through the laying on of hands with prayer with absolute refusal of any medical treatment and with immediate results. This would be a true miracle and like in the first-century, without any reasonable explanation. Both can claim glory to God, but only the latter is a miracle.

- When Jesus healed a people from a lifetime of blindness, a lifetime of being crippled, a lifetime of being deaf and dumb, there simply was no earthly explanation to it.
- When Jesus raised the dead, there is no plausible explanation other than it was a miracle.
- When Jesus came back from the dead Himself, it was a true miracle.
- When the apostles spoke in at least sixteen identifiable languages without using Rosetta Stone, when they clearly knew the scriptures without having gone through the training, when they also brought people back from the dead, healed them of infirmities, cast demons from bodies of the possessed and could be bitten by a deadly snake and live, these defied the physical realm of explanation. Those were real miracles!

1 Corinthians 12:1-3 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware.<sup>2</sup> You know that when you were pagans, you were led astray to the mute idols, however you were led.<sup>3</sup> Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus is accursed"; and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

- Paul addressed something that was of great intrigue to the Corinthians, the spiritual gifts. Many of the Corinthians came from Pagan backgrounds and had a history of idolatry. They would worship their mute idols through magical spells, some of which were invoking curses. Adherents of this practice "*...might leave a short note in a temple or sanctuary, asking him or her to act on their behalf. Some of these have survived, most commonly on lead tablets. One from the sanctuary of Demeter at Corinth reads, 'Hermes of the underworld [grant] heavy curses.' The curse that some in Corinth appear to have been using is "Jesus [is] a curse [anathema]."*" -Clinton Arnold *Corinthians Commentary*
- Paul would say that using Jesus' name to curse another is in itself a cursed behavior (16:22). It appears the winning statement against such mysticism was to proclaim "Jesus is Lord"!

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### Varieties of Gifts and Ministries with Different Effects

1Corinthians 12:4 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. <sup>5</sup> And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. <sup>6</sup> There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. <sup>7</sup> But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

- The Bible demonstrates there are two types of gifts concerning the first-century Christians, miraculous gifts and non-miraculous ministerial passions. Together they accomplished the will of God in the church, though they had different effects. A subtle lesson that Paul taught here is in the same way that the gifts are given to unite them in one message of Christ, so to shall they individually work together as the one church.
- Gifts (karisma) from Interlinear Bible: a spiritual endowment, i.e. religious qualification, or a miraculous faculty. Simply put, the gifts in discussion are a ministerial passion or a miraculous faculty, both of which were given to bring glory to God. We will briefly cover both in order to do justice to the text.
- Since Paul will soon be detailing the miraculous in the next passage, it is necessary to call into remembrance the ministerial gifts at this time. There are two primary passages in the Bible that discuss the ministerial passions.

### The Ministerial Passions

- Romans 12:6-8 Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, *each of us is to exercise them accordingly*: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; <sup>7</sup>if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; <sup>8</sup> or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.
  - Note: Paul wrote in *Romans 1:11* *For I long to see you so that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established*; Since the miraculous gifts were given through the laying on of hands by an apostle and Paul had not been to Rome to distribute miraculous gifts, then by default these would be the non-miraculous gifts.
  - Note 2: Prophet: profemi -one who brings forth his thoughts. Whether a person brings forth their thoughts, either miraculously or non-miraculously, they still brought forth their thoughts.
- Eph 4:11-12 And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup> for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;
  - Note: The absence of the definite article before apostolos makes this missionary. Numerous times apostolos is interpreted as missionary: One Sent Out With a Message.
    - Acts 14:14 Both Paul and Barnabas are called “apostles”.
    - Rom 16:7 refers to Andronicus and Junias as “apostles”.
    - 2 Cor 8:23 Titus and two unnamed brothers that were “sent out” to spread the gospel were called apostolos or “messengers”.
    - Gal 1:19 James, the brother of Jesus is called and “apostle” (See John 7:5).
    - Phil 2:25 calls Epaphroditus the apostolos or “messenger”.
    - 1Thes 2:6 refers to Paul, Timothy and Silas as “apostles”.

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- Heb 3:1 refers to Jesus as “the Apostle” (See John 17:3).

### The ten ministerial passions are as follows:

- 1) Apostolic –The Missionary
- 2) Evangelist –The Proclaimer
- 3) Prophetic –The Confronter
- 4) Teaching –The Exegetical
- 5) Exhortation –The Encourager
- 6) Shepherd –The Nurturer
- 7) Mercy –The Counselor
- 8) Servant –The Helper
- 9) Giver –The Benefactor
- 10) Administration –The Organizer

- These ministerial passions are to be more easily understood as what drives us in life. Some people deeply desire to spread the gospel message while others may desire to show the message through their kind deeds. Some people cannot resist confronting an evil deed while others might take the merciful approach. Some people give of their funds while others desire to give forgiveness. Some tend to desire organization of plans while others in the organization of people.
- We are all different in what drives us to the cross. This is who we were before becoming conversion and continue to be after converting. The only difference is that our passion is set aside for Christ. Peter says the following concerning such:
  - 1 Pet 4:10-11 As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 11 Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

There are ministerial passions that tend to be carried out through speaking, while others through service. Some of these tend to be more subjective than objective. We are strong in some and weak in others. This is what makes us unique individually, yet dependent on one another as a church family.

### The Miraculous Faculties

1 Corinthians 12:8 For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; <sup>9</sup> to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, <sup>10</sup> and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues. <sup>11</sup> But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.

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### The following nine are the miraculous gifts.

1) The Word of Wisdom: The ability to reveal the complete plan of salvation in the most benevolent manner possible.

- Paul's lesson to the Stoics and Epicureans in Acts 17 is a good example of this gift. He had never encountered a situation like that, yet possessed the wisdom to present the gospel to them like a life-long resident.

2) The Word of Knowledge: The ability to understand the message so as to present it to others.

- Acts 4:13 Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John, and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were marveling, and {began} to recognize them as having been with Jesus.

3) Faith: This is not saving faith, but the faith that moves mountains.

- Acts 16:25 But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them;
- Phil 2:17 But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all.
- 2 Cor 1:9 indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves in order that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead;

4) Healing: The ability to supernaturally heal the sick.

- Acts 3:6-7 "...Peter said...in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene-- walk!" 7 And seizing him by the right hand, he raised him up; and immediately his feet and his ankles were strengthened.

5) Miracles: This is in a greater scope than healing the sick. Restoration of limbs, the eyes of the blind, acts of judgment, resurrection.

- Elymas -Acts 13:11 "...you will be blind and not see the sun for a time." And immediately a mist and a darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking those who would lead him by the hand.
- Acts 9:40 But Peter sent them all out and knelt down and prayed, and turning to the body, he said, "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up.

6) Prophecy: The ability to inform and edify and at the same time, demonstrating God as Revealer of things to come.

- Acts 11:28 And one of them named Agabus stood up and {began} to indicate by the Spirit that there would certainly be a great famine all over the world. And this took place in the {reign} of Claudius.
- Acts 21:10-12 "...a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. 11 And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands, and said, "This is what the Holy Spirit says: 'In this way the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'"

7) Discerning of Spirits: The ability to discern who spoke truth and who did not.

- Acts 5:3 But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back {some} of the price of the land?"

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- I Jn 4:1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

8) Tongues: The ability to speak fluently languages never studied. (Acts 2:4-13)

- Acts 2:4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.
- Note: These were identifiable languages, not some “secret prayer language”.
- 1 Cor 14:18-19 I thank God, I speak in tongues more than you all; 19 however, in the church I desire to speak five words with my mind, that I may instruct others also, rather than ten thousand words in a tongue.

9) Interpretation of Tongues: The ability of being able to interpret what was being spoken.

- 1 Cor 14:7 Yet {even} lifeless things, either flute or harp, in producing a sound, if they do not produce a distinction in the tones, how will it be known what is played on the flute or on the harp?

The Holy Spirit gave the apostles the words to speak for the spreading of the gospel and the miracles were in place to back up the words. As *Mark 16:20 states “And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them, and confirmed the word by the signs that followed.”* The Lord worked with them through the Spirit and the miracles to confirm the very word which they spoke. *Heb 2:4 God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.*

The apostles appear to be the only ones that had all nine of these gifts. They could lay their hands on other members of the Church and distribute the various miraculous gifts to them.

- Acts 6:6 And these they brought before the apostles; and after praying, they laid their hands on them.
- Acts 8:17 Then they *began* laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit.
- Acts 19:6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they *began* speaking with tongues and prophesying.
- Rom 1:11-12 For I long to see you so that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established;
- 2 Timothy 1:6 For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.
- Acts 8:18 actually states that “...*Simon saw that the Spirit was bestowed through the laying on of the apostles’ hands...*” Simon the sorcerer was so wrapped up into the mystical arts and sought to open a distributorship of the gifts, but Peter rebuked him in Acts 8:21 saying, “*You have no part or portion in this matter...*” There is NO evidence that others except the apostles had the ability to pass the gifts onto others.

The apostles wrote letters to these Churches through the confirmation of the Holy Spirit; the Churches kept them. Apostolic authority had served its purpose and the word was codified. The fulfillment of the ceasing of gifts of the Holy Spirit was complete as spelled out in the following passage.

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- 1 Corinthians 13:8-10 Love never fails; but if *there are gifts of prophecy*, they will be done away; if *there are tongues*, they will cease; if *there is knowledge*, it will be done away.<sup>9</sup> For we know in part and we prophesy in part;<sup>10</sup> but when the perfect (το τελειον) comes, the partial will be done away.
  - Note: There are three of the nine miraculous faculties mentioned in this section, yet all will be done away when “the perfect” comes. What is the perfect? Some say “He” is Christ while others say “she” is the church, but the definite article implies that it is neuter. The only likely possibility would be “the” perfect word of God.
    - As King David put it in *Psalm 18:30* “*As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the LORD is flawless.*”
    - As Proverbs stated in *30:5* “*Every word of God is perfect.*”
    - As Luke records in *Acts 15:15* “*This is in perfect agreement with the words of the prophets...*”
    - As the apostle John put it in *1 John 2:5* “*...but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected.*”
- Every recorded word of God that we have in our Bible today was already penned by the time John the apostle died in Ephesus at the end of the first century. The miraculous gifts disappeared when the next generation to whom the apostles laid their hands upon hand passed on.
- This gospel message spread throughout the kingdom because it was confirmed by the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit as mentioned prior.
  - 2 Corinthians 12:12 The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles.
  - 1 Peter 1:12 “...those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven...”
  - Romans 15:19 “...in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Spirit...I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.”
  - 1 Thessalonians 1:5 “...for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction...”

Simply put, the miracles of the first-century saints were there to confirm the first-century word called the New Testament, which we have today. The Charismatic movement which exists today seeks to do the opposite by confirming their “miracles” by misinterpretation of the same scriptures. This is why their “miracles” do not look anything like they did in the first-century. To me they are pulling the BIG HOAX on sincere people looking for a relationship with God. It makes people of the religion of Christianity look like charlatans and intellectually dishonest to a doubting world.