The Gifts of The Spirit

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Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, Yeshua:

Three chapters in the New Testament are dedicated to the gifts of the Spirit, and over one hundred references to Spiritual gifts. These gifts were promised to the church, as we read: "Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you" (Luke 24:49, NKJV). And this promise was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost, as we read: "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4). The ministry work of the Apostles was marked by the supernatural, and they were given divine power to perform it. Sharing the Gospel, delivering people from bondage, and guiding them in faith and repentance require the Holy Spirit.

The first reference in scripture to the gifts of the Spirit merely classifies them as "spirituals" or "things of the Spirit" (*pneumatika*). However, in some Bible versions, the word "gifts" is not found in the original Greek. The Greek word *pneumatika* refers to "persons endowed with spiritual gifts." Elsewhere it is used to represent "spiritual men." The Greek word *charismata* comes from the primary word *charis*, which means "grace" and is translated as "spiritual gifts." There are administrative gifts of the Spirit (*diakonia*), better translated as "ministries." There are operations and inner workings of the spiritual gifts (*energemata*). There are manifestations (*ekdílosi*). And there is a diversity of gifts (*diairesis*).

The spirituals are considered gifts bestowed freely by the Holy Spirit but are also much more. They cannot be merited or earned and are of divine origin. While operating through the individual, they are gifts to the body of Christ. Another way to look at the spirituals is that they are various forms of ministries, hence Paul's reference to "a diversity of gifts." The Spirit imparts the *charismata* to the individual so that there might be a diversity (*diairesis*) of ministries (*diakonia*) and outward manifestations (*ekdílosi*) to the body. There are as many kinds of ministries as there are spiritual gifts. Their benefit is for the profit and edification of the entire body. As Paul said, "Since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel" (1 Corinthians 14:12); "He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:11-12).

The words edify, and profit are used eight times in 1 Corinthians. The word edification comes from the Greek word *oikodome*, which means "exhortation" and "encouragement." It relates to

the Greek word *paraclete*, the same word given to the Holy Spirit. The word "consolation" translates from the Greek word *paraklesis*, and the word "comfort" is the translation of the Greek word *paramuthia*, which also means "consolation." And the verb form of *paraklesis* is translated as "I beseech you." The entirety of chapter 14 is dedicated to the proper use of the Spiritual gifts. God has given every believer the endowment to use the gifts intelligently, consistent with scripture, and to edify the whole body. The gifts belong to the church more than they belong to the individual and are of tremendous blessing to the church when used in submission to scripture and wise spiritual leadership. Therefore, we should not use our gifts selfishly or ostentatiously without the love of the Spirit.

Every operation of the spiritual gifts is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit, defined as "outward evidence" of the Spirit. The manifestations cause the believer to be aware of the physical presence of God and should cause us to praise, worship, and be in awe of Him. God does not intend for all the gifts to operate through only a few people. Therefore, every Spirit-filled believer has some capacity for the manifestation of the Spirit. As God is of infinite variety, there may be as many gifts as there are beneficial functions of the church, and preferably, every type of gift should operate within the body. Most importantly, God desires that the spiritual gifts be exercised maturely for the edification, exhortation, encouragement, and comfort of the whole church."

Since we should consider the gifts of the Spirit as ministries, and there may be an unlimited number of ministries to coincide with the diversity of the body of Christ, the gifts outlined in scripture should not be limited as they manifest differently for each person. For example, while two people might have the gift of teaching, one might focus on theology and another on apologetics. One might teach to a congregation, and another may be itinerant. God can create a unique ministry for each person and equip them according to His will. As we read, "You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5). Some might be given a spiritual burden and love for the poor. Others might be called to minister to the affluent. Some may travel overseas, and others serve in their local communities. There is no end to what an infinite God can do.

Certain gifts of the Spirit were active in the Old Testament, most notably, the gift of prophecy. Also, God gave the Israelites unique abilities to construct the Tabernacle and serve in it, including gifts for special skills and artistry and Spiritual gifts of music (worship), praise, and poetry. We read: "I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to design artistic works, to work in gold, in silver, in bronze, in cutting jewels for setting, in carving wood, and to work in all manner of workmanship" (Exodus 31:3-5). He also gave the nation of Israel unique gifts for governance, as we read: "I will take of the Spirit that is upon you [Moses] and will put the same upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, that you may not bear it yourself alone" (Numbers 11:17). King David evidently had these gifts.

Paul lists nine spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12. We read: "To one is given (1) the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another (2) the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another (3) faith by the same Spirit, to another (4) gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another (5) the working of miracles, to another (6) prophecy, to another (7) discerning of spirits, to another (8) different kinds of tongues, to another (9) the interpretation of tongues" (1 Corinthians 12:8-10).

In verse twenty-eight of this chapter, Paul added two additional gifts: Helps (*antilepsis*) to benefit those physically sick or impoverished and governments (*kubernesis*), as in a helmsman, to provide the leadership to navigate the church through challenging waters. And from other passages, we find more gifts of the Spirit. We read:

"Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness" (Romans 12:6-8).

"He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the [a]edifying of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:11-12).

"Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies" (1 Peter 4:9-11).

In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul expands his discussion on the gifts of the Spirit to emphasize the priority of prophecy, the private use of tongues, tongues and their interpretations, prayer and praise in the Spirit, limitations on tongues and prophesying, and not considering the gifts of the Spirit as infallible.^{vii} He does not make sharp distinctions between certain offices, such as apostles, prophets, and teachers, and their endowment with Spiritual gifts, suggesting that a person might operate in multiple offices and the administration of various gifts of the Spirit.

Words of wisdom are not a gift of knowledge per se, but rather, it is the gift of a "word" of wisdom. The Greek word is *logos*, meaning "speech that embodies a concept or idea, a weighty saying, reason, narrative, or doctrine." Together with prophecy, the word of wisdom could function as a vocal gift providing insight for practical conduct or action concerning a course of action to be taken. If a word of wisdom gives insight into our decision-making, words of knowledge bring to light the principles of doctrine that form the basis for this decision. The gift may bring scriptural truth or reveal facts necessary for further action. Together these two gifts, wisdom and knowledge, are for the church's guidance in its acts. These gifts of revelation work harmoniously with the written word, never contradicting scripture and edifying and comforting the church.

The gift of faith is that of "special faith," which is often associated with the gifts of healing and miracles. The Greek of Mark 11:22 literally reads, "Have the faith of God." This is the kind of faith God seeks when we pray for miracles. Jesus rebuked His disciples several times, saying: "O you of little faith" (Matthew 8:26). Of all the Spiritual gifts, only the gift of healing has the term charismata attached. In Greek, Paul says the gifts of healing are plural, suggesting many types of healing for different diseases or a diversity of healing ministries within the body where each exercise of healing power is a separate gift.

In the Great Commission recorded in Mark 16, Jesus said signs, most often signs of healing, would follow the ministries of those who witnessed and preached the Gospel. We read, "These signs will follow those who believe" (Mark 16:17). The implication is that signs would follow "all" who believe, not just church leaders. God has made provision for physical healing to be a ministry of the church and for the gifts of healing to operate with great faith. Elders and pastors are to be ready at all times to anoint with oil (symbolizing the Holy Spirit) and pray with laying of hands and great faith over all who are sick.* While the sick are healed by the one praying with faith, the ill person's faith is also important and sometimes essential.* Nowhere in scripture does it say that any person has the gift of healing, and most pastors have disclaimed possession of it. In other words, the gifts of healing belong to the church, not an individual.

The Greek *energemata dunameon*, commonly translated as "working of miracles," literally means "operation of supernatural powers." Similar to the gifts of healing, it is also plural and operated through the gift of great faith.^{xii} A miracle is an event or action caused by a supernatural act of God that contradicts the laws of science. Examples are the instant transportation of Philip from Gaza to Azotus, the striking of Elymas, the sorcerer with blindness, and Paul's shaking off a poisonous viper.^{xiii} In the New Testament, they are called "signs, wonders, and miracles." From the Greek *dunamis, teras, and semion*, they mean "events of divine power," "events that cause wonderment," and "events that signify something about God or His workings."^{xiv} The term "wonder" is never used alone but always with the term "sign." God does not manifest His miracles simply for our amusement but wants to signify or teach us something from them.^{xv}

The word "prophet" is translated from the Greek *prophetes*. It is derived from the words *pro*, meaning "before" (as "on behalf of"), and *phemi* which means "to declare or say." Together, the word *prophetes* can refer to one who "predicts something," "one who solemnly declares," or "someone who speaks on behalf of someone else." In Hebrew, the word for prophet is *Navi*, meaning "to announce, witness, or testify." The Lord declared: "I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him" (Deuteronomy 18:18).

The Old Testament prophet was the one who spoke to God's people on His behalf, declaring the words that He had put in their mouths. Sometimes the message would be for a current situation and other times for a warning of things to come. There are two kinds of prophets in the New Testament. Those in the church who occupy the office of the prophet and those who only possess the gift of prophecy. Paul encouraged all believers to seek the gifts of the Spirit,

especially the gift of prophecy, and that each should prophesy in proportion to the measure of one's faith.**vi However, possessing the gift does not make one a prophet. As we have read, only some have been called to the office of the prophet. Predicting the future is more likely reserved for those who hold it.**vii

The purpose of prophesying is to minister to the church by speaking edification, exhortation, and words of comfort.** And, the purpose for those who occupy the office of the prophet is for: "The equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12-13). One is to equip the church for the ministry of edification, exhortation, and comfort, and the other is for the ministry itself. The gift operates to build up the church spiritually, often in conjunction with the gifts of wisdom and knowledge.**

Discerning of spirits derives from the Greek *diakrisis pneumaton* and means "to discern," to discriminate," or "to distinguish." Paul uses this term to dispute a question about whether the church in Corinth had anyone wise enough to "judge between his brethren." In this instance, members of the church were misusing the communion bread. He said: "Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge [diakrino, meaning discern]" (1 Corinthians 14:29). The implication here is the gift of prophecy should be used concurrently with the gift of discernment, enabling the church to find the source of the spiritual manifestation, whether it is of the Holy Spirit, an evil spirit, or the human spirit.

All Spirit-filled believers should have some level of discernment to recognize whether the utterance is edifying and provides Spiritual value. If the utterance is from an evil spirit, it should be denounced by the church leaders and the believers warned.^{xxi} However, the gift of discernment is not to judge the person but the spirit. And as the exercise of the gifts is not infallible, we must be careful not to become offended if we prophesy incorrectly and sensitive not to quench the Holy Spirit if a prophetic word is truthfully uncomfortable.^{xxii}

As we have been learning, we should see God enabling us with His Spiritual gifts to serve Him in the natural and spiritual realms. But on the Day of Pentecost, the Lord also gave new Spiritual gifts to the church, specifically, the ability to speak and interpret other tongues (languages). Logically, the promise of the Holy Spirit would be marked by a unique sign that had never existed before. Virtually every other gift of the Spirit we know from scripture was in operation before Pentecost, and only the ability to speak and interpret other languages was new.

The Greek *gene glosson* means "kinds of tongues." And the word "interpretation" translates from the Greek word *hermeneia*, from which the English word *hermeneutics* is derived, and means the "science of interpretation." The Greek word has several meanings, including "translation," "explanation," and "interpretation." The verb form means "translation," and the noun form, *hermeneia*, suggests the "idea of explanation or interpretation" and not a word-for-word translation.**

Paul said there are human tongues (languages) and those of angels.**vi While human languages are for men, mainly the unsaved, and require an interpretation, other heavenly languages are mysteriously used to praise and pray to God in the Spirit, and no one understands their tongue.**xvii Some refer to these heavenly tongues as their Spiritual prayer language, suggesting even that Jesus may have prayed inwardly in tongues and groanings (stenazo).**xviii This is the same word Paul used when he said: "The Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings [stenazo] which cannot be uttered" (Romans 8:26).

Even after Pentecost, we see evidence of this sign in scripture. For example, at the house of Cornelius, we read: "While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God" (Acts 10:44-46). And regarding Paul's experience in Ephesus, we read: "When Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied" (Acts 19:6).

Those with the gift of tongues are also encouraged to pray for the gift of interpretation. *xix Paul said, *I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding" (1 Corinthians 14:15). The gift of tongues, when used publicly with the gift of interpretation, takes on the form of prophecy. We are reminded the prophet is taken from among his brethren and speaks in the name of the Lord.** While the gift of tongues can be a sign to the unbeliever, the gift of prophecy convinces them to repent and turn to the Lord.** Prophecy and tongues with interpretation, exercised with scriptural order while edifying, must not preclude the anointed teaching, preaching of the Gospel, and activation of other ministries, such as prayer and worship. Therefore, we are instructed that utterances with tongues and prophecy should be limited to two or three.**

It is important to remember that speaking in tongues is not the baptism of the Holy Spirit; it is only evidence of it. And while Paul did not diminish this gift in any way, he did tell us to: "Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy" (1 Corinthians 14:1). In other words, he instructed us to seek Godly character (the fruit of the Spirit) and all the Spiritual gifts the Lord wills to give us, and intentionally pursue the gift of prophecy. Paul continued, saying: "I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied; for he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification" (1 Corinthians 14:5). Paul was not against the gift of tongues. He was merely saying that the gift of prophecy is to be coveted and encouraged. Tongues are directed primarily at God for prayer and praise, but prophecy is preferred because it edifies, exhorts, and comforts the body.

In Romans 12, Paul reemphasized the gift of prophecy and its ministry. He discusses the teacher and his teaching, the exhorter and his exhortation, the giver and his liberality, the leader and his diligence, and the cheerful mercy shower. In Ephesians 4, Paul addressed various church ministry offices, including the apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher. And Peter

highlighted other probable Spirit gifts, including hospitality, intercession, witnessing, and virtually any ministry necessary to serve the body of Christ, saying: "If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever" (1 Peter 4:11).**

The Didache, an early teaching on church administration, combines the offices of apostles and prophets. The title apostle comes from the Greek word *Apostolos*, meaning "a messenger, one sent forth with orders." The meaning is extended to "one commissioned and sent to another country," which is effectively a missionary. The verb *apostello* means "to send away." In Hebrew, the term is *Shaliach* and is used to describe an "emissary" or "sent one." The prophet is listed as second in importance only to the apostles, and they exercised the gift of prophecy and held a place of leadership with the apostles and teachers.

The word evangelist comes from the Greek word *euaggelistes* which means "bringer of good tidings." The English word for Gospel is translated from another form of the same Greek word. An evangelist is solely devoted to preaching the good news of the Kingdom, particularly the message of salvation. As men cannot make themselves leaders, nor can they be made by others, these men in scripture possessed an additional *leadership charisma*. The church must only set apart those God has called, chosen, and anointed.

Some separate the pastor and teacher into separate offices, and others combine them. While there may be teachers who are not pastors, there are no pastors who cannot teach. As Jesus instructed Peter: "Feed my sheep" (John 21:17). One of the necessary qualifications for a bishop, pastor, or elder was the ability to teach. Therefore, a genuine pastor will have the *charisma* to teach. The words pastor and shepherd come from the same Greek word, *poimen*. Jesus called Himself "the good shepherd. He is also called "the great shepherd," "the chief shepherd," and "the gentle shepherd." Pastors merely serve as shepherds under the chief shepherd, Jesus.

The apostles laid the foundation for the church, and the prophets continue to inspire, exhort, comfort, and motivate the church. The teachers instruct the church in sound doctrine, guarding the flock against false teachers. The pastors shepherd the congregation, and the evangelists preach the Gospel and the message of salvation, advancing the Kingdom. While the prophet's anointing is impromptu for motivation, the anointing of the teacher is measured, operating in the word of truth and the ability to communicate clearly and accurately.

For every ministry in the body of Christ, there is a Spiritual *charisma*. And as we assemble, we will see other signs of the Spirit, including a life filled with praise and awe toward God and an overflow of joy. We will have a love for all people, especially the Jewish people. We will have a passion for lost souls, a burning desire to preach the Gospel and testify about Jesus, and a hunger for God's Kingdom.** The Holy Spirit will give us a new boldness and power to defend our faith, resist and rebuke the devil's authority, and the grace and love to endure persecution for the sake of the Gospel.*

All these passions will activate the fruit and gifts of the Spirit, giving us Godly character and centering everything in our lives in Christ, and enabling us to comprehend the greatness of our Savior as He is revealed and gloried as never before. The Spirit will also give us a greater authority and the love of Christ to preach, teach, and witness. He will provide us with new energy and Spirit in prayer and worship and a more profound love for and richer insight into the Bible. And He will give us a manifestation of other gifts, such as receiving words of wisdom and knowledge, gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, and discerning of spirits, all these and more to edify the body of Christ. All in the second spirits of the body of Christ.

Amen!

ⁱ Mark 16:17.

ii All Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Bible (NKJV) unless otherwise noted, Thomas Nelson Inc., 1982.

iii 2 Corinthians 3:4-6.

^{iv} Duffield, Guy P. and Van Cleave, Nathaniel M. *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*. Foursquare Media. 1910.

^v 1 Corinthians 14:3, 14:12, 14:20, 14:26. Acts 11:22-26. Hebrews 10:24.

vi 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 12:28-30. Acts 20:35, 27:11. 1 Timothy 5:17. Hebrews 11:34. Revelation 18:17.

vii 1 Corinthians 14:1-2, 14:14-15, 14:22-23, 14:28-29. Romans 8:26-27. Ephesians 5:18-19, 6:18. 1 Thessalonians 5:20. Isaiah 28:11-13.

viii Acts 6:10, 15:28. 1 Corinthians 2:13-16.

ix Hebrews 11:6.

^x Matthew 13:58. Mark 6:13.

xi Exodus 15:26, 23:25. Deuteronomy 32:39. 2 Kings 20:5. Psalm 30:1-2, 103:3, 107:17-22. Isiah 38:4-5, 53:5. Matthew 4:23, 8:8, 8:16-17, 10:8. Mark3:14-15. Luke 4:40, 9:6. Acts 3:1-11, 14:9-10, 5:15-16, 8:7, 28:8. Romans 10:17. 1 Corinthians 12:9. James 5:14-16. 1 Peter 2:24.

xii Matthew 27:20, 21:20-22.

xiii Acts 5:12-15, 5:18-20, 8:39-40, 9:36-42, 12:5-10, 13:8-12, 16:23-30, 19:11-12, 20:9-12, 28:3-5.

xiv Acts 2:22, 2:43, 6:8, 8:13. Hebrews 2:4.

xv Hebrews 2:4.

xvi Matthew 9:29. 1 Corinthians 14:1, 14:5, 14:24-25, 14:39.

xvii Ephesians 4:11.

xviii 1 Corinthians 14:3.

xix Acts 15:32.

xx 1 Corinthians 6:5. Hebrews 5:14.

xxi 1 Corinthians 14:1, 14:29.

xxii 1 Thessalonians 5:19-20.

xxiii Acts 2:4, 19:6.

xxiv 1 Corinthians 1:5. Romans 15:14. Revelation 2-3. 2 Peter 1:19.

xxv John 1:38, 1:42, 9:7. Hebrews 7:2.

xxvi 1 Corinthians 13:1.

xxvii 1 Corinthians 14:2, 14:5, 14:13-15, 14:22, 14:26-28. Romans 8:26-27.

xxviii 1 Corinthians 14:2, 14:14-15. Ephesians 5:18-19, 6:18.

xxix 1 Corinthians 14:13.

xxx 1 Corinthians 14:5, 14:14-15. Acts 2:11, 10:45-46.

xxxi 1 Corinthians 14:22-23. Isaiah 28:11-13.

xxxiii 1 Corinthians 14:32-33. 1 Thessalonians 5:20.

xxxiii Luke 11:11-13. Acts 2:4, 10:45-46, 19:6

xxxiv Matthew 9:29. Luke 3:11. Acts 4:36, 11:23, 14:22, 15:31-32, 16:40, 20:2. 1 Corinthians 1:4-5, 1:7, 2:10-16, 12:5, 12:8, 12:28. 2 Corinthians 8:1-2, 8:5, 8:7, 9:7, 11:28. 1 Thessalonians 5:12, 5:14-22. 1 Timothy 2:1-3, 5:17. 2 Timothy 1:11, 2:2. 1 John 2:20, 2:27. Hebrews 13:7, 13:24. Ephesians 2:4, 6:18-20.

xxxv Ephesians 4:7-8, 4:11-12.

xxxxii 1 Timothy 3:2, 4:14. 2 Timothy 1:6. Ephesians 5:18. Colossians 3:16. 1 Corinthians 14:15. Acts 1:8, 5:32, 23:11, 26:22. 1 John 5:6.

xxxvii https://www.earlychristianwritings.com/didache.html

xxxviii Hebrews 13:20. 1 Peter 5:4. Isaiah 40:11.

- xxxix Acts 1:8, 2:11, 2:14-41, 2:46-47, 4:19-20, 5:29-33, 6:8-10, 10:46, 11:22-24, 19:6, 26:28-29.
- xl Acts 4:7-8, 4:7, 4:13, 4:17, 4:31, 13:9-10, 13:50-52. Luke 12:11-12.
- xli John 14:21-23, 15:26, 16:14-15. Ephesians 1:17-23.
- xlii Acts 1:8, 2:41, 3:1, 4:23-33, 6:4, 10:9. John 15:26-27, 16:13. 1 Corinthians 2:4-5. Romans 8:26. Jude 1:20. Ephesians 6:18. 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 14:14-17.