

Associated Gospel Churches - Articles of Faith and Doctrine

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

February 5, 2006

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

XIII. The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit administers spiritual gifts to the church to glorify Christ in the building of His body. We believe that God, the Holy Spirit, is sovereign in the bestowing of His gifts for the perfecting of the saints for the work of their ministry, and that it is not God's will that any one gift should be given to all believers, although all believers have at least one gift...
(more)

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

XIII. The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

... (continued) We believe that whenever spiritual gifts are exercised, they should always be within the limits expressly given in the Scriptures (e.g. 1 Corinthians 14:23-40). We believe that in the early church speaking in tongues (a human language unknown to the speaker), and the working of miracles were sign gifts demonstrated primarily to authenticate God's revelation through the apostles and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We believe that today such signs are not necessary to give evidence of the baptism or of the filling of the Spirit, nor are they a mark of spiritual maturity. We believe that special divine revelation for authoritative Scripture ceased with the Apostolic Age.

Acts 2:1-13; Hebrews 2:3-4; 1 Corinthians 12-14; Ephesians 2:20; Romans 12:3-8; John 14:26; 1 Peter 4:7-11; Galatians 1:8-9; Ephesians 4:11-13; Revelation 22:18-29; 2 Corinthians 12:12

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

- **Spiritual gifts**

- **Definition**

- **abilities empowered by the Holy Spirit and is used in any ministry of the church**

- Each believer given at least one gift by the Holy Spirit

“Now *to each one* the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To the one is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge... to another faith... to another gifts of healing... All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and He gives them to each one, just as He determines.” (1 Cor. 12:7-11)

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

- **Spiritual gifts**
 - **Types of spiritual gifts**
 - **Many different gifts given by the Holy Spirit**
 - **Several 'lists' of gifts given in the NT**

- 1 Corinthians 12:8-10	-Romans 12:6-8
-1 Corinthians 12:28	-Ephesians 4:11
-1 Corinthians 7:7	-1 Peter 4:11

 - **approximately 22 gifts listed, with some overlap between lists**
 - **likely not exhaustive, but illustrative**

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

- **Spiritual gifts**

- **Types of spiritual gifts**

- **Many different gifts given by the Holy Spirit**

- | | | |
|------------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| - apostle | - message of wisdom | -serving |
| - prophet | - message of knowledge | -encouraging |
| - teacher | - faith | -contributing |
| - miracles | - distinguishing spirits | -leadership |
| - healings | - interpretation of | -mercy |
| - helps | tongues | -marriage |
| - administration | - evangelist | -celibacy |
| - tongues | -pastor-teacher | |

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

- **Spiritual gifts**
 - **Types of spiritual gifts**
 - **Many different gifts given by the Holy Spirit**
 - each believer has at least one gift, but no one gift given to all believers
- “Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But eagerly desire the greater gifts.” (1 Cor. 12:29-30)**

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

- **Spiritual gifts**

- **Purpose of spiritual gifts**

- **to equip the church for ministry, in order to build up the body of Christ**

“Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.” (1 Cor. 12:7)

“It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” (Eph. 4:11-13)

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

- **Spiritual gifts**

- **Purpose of spiritual gifts**

- **to unify believers in the body of Christ**

- diversity of gifts requires believers to work together
 - we enjoy greater unity as a result of joining closely with those who are different from us (!)

“The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I don’t need you!’ And the head cannot say to the feet, ‘I don’t need you!’ On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable... But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.” (1 Cor. 12:21-27)

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

- **Spiritual gifts**

- **Exercise of spiritual gifts**

- **the Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts as He pleases (1 Cor. 12:11)**

- ‘strength’ of gift (ability, power, etc.) may vary between believers, “as He determines” (1 Cor. 12:11)

- **but gifts need to be applied & used by believers**

- ‘strength’ of gift may increase/decrease with use/disuse

- “Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you. Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress.” (1 Tim. 4:14-15)

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

- **Spiritual gifts**
 - **Exercise of spiritual gifts**
 - **gifts are tools for ministry, not necessarily related to Christian maturity**
 - ‘strength’ of gift may increase/decrease with use/disuse, but possessing particular gifts does not necessarily indicate maturity
 - e.g. Corinthian church had ++ gifts (1 Cor. 1:7), but were immature – “Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly – mere infants in Christ.” (1 Cor. 3:1)
 - danger in charismatics’ tendency to see speaking in tongues as necessary sign of ‘baptism in the Holy Spirit’

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

- **Spiritual gifts**

- **Exercise of spiritual gifts**

- **gifts must be exercised within Scriptural limits**

- will otherwise ultimately harm, not build, the Church
 - e.g. tongues (1 Cor. 14:27-28)

- “**If anyone speaks in a tongue...**”

- “two – or at most three – should speak...”
 - “one at a time...”
 - “and someone must interpret.”
 - “If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and God.”

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

- **Spiritual gifts**
 - **Exercise of spiritual gifts**
 - **gifts must be exercised within Scriptural limits**
 - e.g. prophecies (1 Cor. 14:29-33)
 - “Two or three prophets should speak...”
 - “and the others should weigh carefully what is said.”
 - “And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop. For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged. The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets. For God is not a God of disorder but of peace.”
 - “But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.” (1 Cor. 14:40)

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

- **Spiritual gifts**
 - **Exercise of spiritual gifts**
 - **gifts must be exercised within Scriptural limits**
 - e.g. pastor-teachers (Eph. 4:11)
 - “Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach...” (1 Tim. 3:2ff)
 - “I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent.” (1 Tim. 2:12)

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

- **Spiritual gifts**
 - **‘Sign’ gifts**
 - **e.g. tongues, miracles**
 - **controversy – are these gifts still operative today?**
 - **charismatics & many evangelicals say yes**
 - **“cessationists” – argue that some gifts (i.e. ‘sign’ gifts such as tongues, miracles, prophecy) ceased at the end of the apostolic age**
 - **include Christians from Reformed (e.g. B.B. Warfield) and dispensationalist (e.g. John MacArthur) backgrounds**

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

- **Spiritual gifts**

- **Cessationism**

- **holds that miraculous gifts were given primarily to authenticate God's messengers of revelation, especially those who would write Scripture (e.g. apostles (NT) & prophets (OT))**

- “...built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Himself as the chief cornerstone.” (Eph. 2:20)

- **the purpose of the gifts therefore ended when the canon of Scripture was completed**
 - **the gifts therefore ceased with the end of the apostolic age**

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

- Spiritual gifts

- Cessationism

- some Scriptures used to defend position

- 2 Corinthians 12:12

- “The things that mark an apostle – signs, wonders and miracles – were done among you with great perseverance.” (NIV)*

- Hebrews 2:3-4

- “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will?” (KJV)*

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

- Spiritual gifts
 - Cessationism

- some Scriptures used to defend position

Acts 2:22

“Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was *a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through Him, as you yourselves know.*”

1 Corinthians 13:8-10

“Love never fails. *But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears.*” (NIV)

- some cessationists argue ‘when perfection comes’ refers to time when Scripture was completed – thus, tongues, prophecies, etc. ceased

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

- **Spiritual gifts**
 - **Cessationism**
 - **some other arguments**
 - signs, wonders, and miracles seemed to be performed largely (almost exclusively?) by apostles or those closely associated with the apostles
 - **thus, once apostles were gone, so would be signs & wonders**

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

- **Spiritual gifts**
 - **Cessationism**
 - **some other arguments**
 - miraculous gifts seemed to decline as time went on, even during the apostolic age
 - **less mention of miraculous gifts in later epistles**
 - **Paul unable to heal Epaphroditus (Phil. 3:25-30) & Trophimus (2 Tim. 4:20)**
 - miraculous gifts appear to have ceased historically, after the apostolic age

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

- **Spiritual gifts**
 - **Cessationism**
 - **some other arguments**
 - **tongues**
 - in NT, refers to other human languages (e.g. Acts 2:1-13)
 - primary purpose in early church was as a visible sign of baptism with the Holy Spirit demonstrating equality and unity of Jew, Samaritan & Gentile believers in body of Christ, since all received the same Spirit
 - once this principle established in the Church and in Scripture (and once Scripture was completed), tongues no longer necessary

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

- **Spiritual gifts**
 - **Cessationism**
 - **some other arguments**
 - **modern-day tongues & miracles seem to bear little resemblance to the gifts in the apostolic church**
 - **e.g. few would claim tongues today are actual human languages**
 - **miracles (e.g. healings) in Jesus' day and in early church were almost always completely successful, instantaneous, and indisputable even for skeptics – unlike many 'miracles' today**

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

- **Spiritual gifts**
 - **Cessationism**
 - **some objections**
 - signs and wonders did indeed serve to authenticate messengers of God's revelation, but that was not their only purpose (even if it may have been primary)
 - other purposes for signs, wonders & miracles include:
 - to authenticate the message (and proclaimers) of the Gospel (e.g. Philip in Samaria)
 - to bear witness to the fact that the kingdom of God has come (e.g. Matt. 12:28)
 - to help those in need (e.g. Matt. 20:30-34)
 - to remove hindrances to ministry (e.g. Tabitha in Acts 9)
 - to bring glory to God (e.g. Matt. 9:8)

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

- **Spiritual gifts**

- **Cessationism**

- **some objections**

- **meaning of passages such as 2 Cor. 12:12 disputed**

“The things that mark an apostle – signs, wonders and miracles – were done among you with great perseverance.” (NIV)

- **NIV translation (& its implications) disputed**

“The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, *with* signs and wonders and mighty works.” (ESV)

- **alternate translations suggest signs, wonders & miracles accompanied other signs of a true apostle, but were not necessarily the primary things that marked out an apostle**

 - **Greek word for ‘with’ (ESV): ‘*en*’ (=‘with’, ‘by’ or ‘in’)**

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

- Spiritual gifts
 - Cessationism

- some objections

- 1 Corinthians 13:8-10**

- “Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears.” (NIV)*

- charismatics (and others) argue ‘when perfection comes’ refers to Christ’s return, since the passage goes on to say that we will see Him face to face (which doesn’t seem to fit well with completion of the canon of Scripture)

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

- Spiritual gifts

- Cessationism

- some objections

- signs, wonders, and miracles were not necessarily performed just by the apostles and close associates

1 Corinthians 12:28

And in the church God has appointed first of all *apostles*, second prophets, third teachers, then *workers of miracles...*

- lists workers of miracles separate from apostles (although apostles no doubt also did miracles)

Galatians 3:5

Does God give you His Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard?

- suggests miracles performed among Galatians in absence of apostles

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

- **Spiritual gifts**
 - **Cessationism**
 - **some objections**
 - the relative lack of mention of miracles in later epistles do not mean they weren't happening
 - **may have been happening in background; focus was just shifted to other things**
 - **may not have been mentioned since it was assumed to be part of common experience**
 - **dispute the claim that miraculous gifts appear to have ceased historically, after the apostolic age**

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

- Spiritual gifts
 - Cessationism
 - some objections
 - tongues
 - in NT, may not always refer to a known human language
 - e.g. 1 Cor. 13:1
 - “If I speak in the tongues of men *and of angels...*”
 - thus, tongues today legitimate, even if not human language
 - tongues had purposes other than authentication
 - many charismatics argue tongues still evidence baptism (and filling) of the Holy Spirit today – claim that this purpose never ceased (even if lost for a while by the church)

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

- **Spiritual gifts**
 - **Cessationism**
 - **some objections**
 - **modern-day miracles may not be as successful or effective as in the early church, but**
 - **spiritual gifts can vary in strength, as the Spirit wills**
 - **abuses of gifts do not negate the gift (e.g. false teachers do not negate the gift of teaching)**
 - **some healings and miracles do occur today – and ‘some’ is still better than ‘none’**

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

- The AGC position

- Miraculous gifts

- **fundamentally, a cessationist position**

We believe that in the early church speaking in tongues (a human language unknown to the speaker), and the working of miracles were sign gifts demonstrated primarily to authenticate God's revelation through the apostles and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We believe that today such signs are not necessary to give evidence of the baptism or of the filling of the Spirit, nor are they a mark of spiritual maturity. We believe that special divine revelation for authoritative Scripture ceased with the Apostolic Age.

- **gifts given primarily as signs for purposes of authentication**

- **“special divine revelation for authoritative Scripture ceased with the Apostolic Age” – and by implication, so did the sign gifts**

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

- The AGC position
 - Miraculous gifts
 - **fundamentally, a cessationist position**
 - **but seems somewhat softer than previous edition**

Previous wording:

“...were sign gifts demonstrated in the early church to authenticate God’s revelation through the apostles and the baptism of the Holy Spirit.”

Current wording:

*“...were sign gifts demonstrated **primarily** to authenticate God’s revelation through the apostles and the baptism of the Holy Spirit”*

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

- The AGC position

- Miraculous gifts

- fundamentally, a cessationist position

- but seems somewhat softer than previous edition

Previous wording:

“...no such signs give evidence of the baptism today...”

Current wording:

“...today such signs are not necessary to give evidence of the baptism...”

- seems to leave a little more room for possibility that these gifts are still operative today, even if their primary purpose no longer exists and they are no longer to be expected as part of the normative Christian experience

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

- **Concluding thoughts**

- in disagreements between believers, need to remember the ‘most excellent way’ of love (1 Cor. 12:31-13:13)
- in the Body of Christ, cessationists and charismatics need each other

“The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I don’t need you!’ And the head cannot say to the feet, ‘I don’t need you!’ On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable... But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.” (1 Cor. 12:21-27)

Next class

**The Unity of the True Church in
the Mystical Body of Christ**

February 12, 2006

References

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- **MacArthur, J.F. *Charismatic Chaos*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), p.1-46, 171-193.**