



Miraculous Gifts of the Spirit

A Biblical observation about Miraculous Gifts of the Holy Spirit

By: R. Chip Denief

The Scripture is quite clear on several points about Apostolic powers, and special gifts.

Jesus said that He would endow the **Apostles** with special powers (powers only promised & given to the Apostles) as a means through which they could carry the Gospel. These special powers included tongues, prophecy, healing, special remembrance, an “extra” measure of the Holy Spirit who would teach them all things. These men were given a special call by Jesus (one which no one else shares or can claim) and they were given special authority by Christ within the Church.

Please take the time to carefully read the following passages:

1 Cor 12:28, Luke 6:13, Gal 1:1, John 15:27, Acts 1:21,22, Matt 16:19, Matt 18:18, Matt 19:28, Gal 6:16, 1 Cor 5:3-6, John 14:26, John 16:13,14, Acts 1:4,8, 2 Cor. 12:12

These powers are clearly shown throughout the entire New Testament as being **unique** to the Apostles alone. It is not until **Acts 6:1-8** that we find the first instance of the Apostles giving a **measure** of these special gifts to another. Here, we find seven Godly, Christian men who were selected by the body of believers to be given special powers, through the laying on of the hands of the Apostles, in order to equip them for the special needs of the body, and to provide some relief for the Apostles... who were the only one performing miracles. It's important to understand that these men were not endowed with **all** of the gifts of the Apostles, they were given a limited amount... one, or perhaps two gifts at most. **God** selected the gifts to be imparted to each one, the Apostles were simply the conduit through which God imparted the gifts.

It's also significant to note that the event of the seven men who received the laying on of the Apostles' hands occurred about 7 years into the history of the Church... 7 years from Pentecost, where God poured out His spirit upon the Apostles, and began His church.

These special gifts, given by the laying on of the Apostles' hands, could not be transferred to anyone else... they could only be given through the **direct** laying on of the Apostles' hands. We know this because there are events when the special gifts were dispersed, and those who witnessed were amazed at the authority of the Apostles. One significant event, which clears any confusion in this matter, is the event of Simon, as recorded in Acts 8:6-7. Here, it is clear that Simon recognized the special authority of the Apostles and their ability to do miraculous things, and that the ability to do such miracles occurred only through the laying on of the Apostle's hands (Acts 8:18-19), he offered to pay them for the gift. Clearly, this was an earmark of Apostolic authority & power that wasn't occurring on a regular basis.

Other who received this power through the laying on of the Apostles' hands were:

Stephen: Acts 6:8, Philip: Acts 8:6-7, Samaritan Christians: Acts 8:15-17, the 12 at Ephesus: Acts 19:1-7, Christians in Rome: Romans 1:11, Timothy: II Timothy 1:6. This truth of gifts conveyed only through the hands of the Apostles is referred to in **Hebrews 6:2**.

There is one very special, significant event that moves outside this rule. It is the event of the household of Cornelius in **Acts 10:44-48**. In this event, occurring 10 years after Pentecost, the Gospel is given to the Gentiles, and God's Spirit "falls upon" those of Cornelius' household, as a sign to Peter & the other Apostles that God is bringing the Gospel to the Gentiles. This is the only Pentecost type experience where the Spirit falls down & miraculous gifts are given... other than the Day of Pentecost itself. Why did this happen? Because 10 years had gone by since Pentecost and almost no effort was made by the Christians to leave Jerusalem, or to evangelize others. The Gentile nations had been ignored, and God was showing the Apostles (and the Church) that salvation is for Jew & Gentile.

Some would argue that Saul was given the Holy Spirit in a special manner. Look at the account as recorded in **Acts 9:10-18**. Here, Ananias gives two reasons for coming to Saul: (1) that he might have his sight restored... (2) that he might be filled with the Holy Spirit. Ananias did two things for Paul: (1) He laid his hands on him; and (2) he baptized him.

Ananias must have been a leader in the early church who had received miraculous powers from the laying of the Apostles' hands. As a consequence, through the laying on of his hands, miraculous healings could take place. After the healing took place Ananias baptized Saul so that he might receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38) and thereby be filled with the Spirit. No miraculous signs (speaking in tongues) accompanied the laying on of hands by Ananias. The phrase "filled with the Holy Spirit" does not necessarily refer to the supernatural **falling** of the Spirit (Acts 8:16), but rather is a general term by which any measure of the influence of the Holy Spirit in one's life is indicated. Frequently, the filling of the Spirit is connected with boldness in proclaiming the Word of God. (see Acts 2:4, 4:8, 31: 13:9).

Now, since there are **no Apostles** in the church today and since no one today could ever meet the Biblical requirements of Apostleship-- no person today can possibly possess the Biblical gifts of the Spirit. Miraculous, spiritual gifts were given as a **short-term** ministry tool. Tongues is a sign of judgment according to I Corinthians 14 and always occurred when non-believing Jews were present. Isaiah prophesied about the Pentecost time, audience and setting.

There are desirable gifts which are present for today, but they are not of the special, miraculous order. The gifts of today are Preaching & Teaching (similar to the concept of prophecy, but relying upon the already revealed Word of God, not some new, special revelation), compassion, encouragement & edification, hospitality. These include a variety of expressions... singing, benevolent works, kindness... etc. These are **earmarks** of a Christian... though we do not all possess the same measure or the same gifts, necessarily. When people step forward and claim to possess miraculous gifts of the Spirit, they should immediately be asked what Apostle conferred this gift upon them. Much strange behavior today is attributed to the influence of the Holy Spirit. But the Holy Spirit has indicated in the Written Word that genuine, God-given supernatural powers were communicated **only** through the hands of the Apostles.

A Bible believing Christian who evaluates all religious claims in the light of the infallible Word can only conclude that the strange manifestations being observed in some quarters today are (1) a delusion of the devil (see Rev. 13:14; 16:14; 19:20; II Thessalonians 2:9); (2) a psychological delusion; or (3) a deliberate fabrication.

The question of course, is not what God **can** do, but what He has said He **will** do. God has made it plain to those who will study carefully the Word, that miraculous gifts were to be transmitted through the laying on of the hands of the Apostles.