**HOLY SPIRIT**

**GIFTS AND GIFTINGS**

God created man in His Own image. Man is a three-part being, made up of a body, a soul (mind, will and emotions/“heart”), and a spirit (his life essence). God is a three-part being. Part of Himself is God the Father, which I think of as the “soul” or mind, will and emotions of God. Part of Himself is the Body which He created for Himself to come to earth in, which is His Son, Jesus Christ the Lord. The third part of Himself is His Holy Spirit, which I think of as His life essence and the power of His being. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son because they are One, and because the Holy Spirit is part of God’s Being, He is One with them and is worshipped and glorified as part of the whole Being of God.

God does not change (Mal.3:6). God called Himself “I AM”, meaning He always was, is and will be Who He is. He always has done what He does and always will. Every aspect of His Being will always be the same. His Holy Spirit has always enacted and brought about the things that are in the mind and will of God. The Holy Spirit will always be the same. He does not change. He has spoken through the prophets and performed miracles and revealed the Mind of Christ and works wonders throughout all eternity. The Holy Spirit still does these things through whosoever will yield himself to Him to be used by God for His purposes.

God establishes His everlasting covenant with those who will accept Him as He came in His Body as Jesus Christ, and accept that His way is the only way for relationship to be restored with Him. Our way of being in that Everlasting Covenant is to give our body as a living sacrifice, which is our spiritual act of worship (Romans 12:1). Both parties, when making a covenant, must make a sacrifice. God has said in Psalm 50:5, “Gather to Me My consecrated ones, who made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.” God gave the Body of His Son as His sacrificial offering, and we give our own bodies, while we are still alive, as our sacrificial offering. In John 4:23-24, Jesus told the woman at the well that “…a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and His worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.” What we serve is what we worship. God is looking for people who will give their bodies to Him to serve Him. He wants to possess our body by His Holy Spirit to bring about His purposes in the earth. God wants to make His presence known (His “glory” or, evidence of the reality of His existence) through those who will yield themselves to Him as a living sacrifice.

Jesus was the “firstborn among many brothers” (Romans 8:29). God is still looking for those who will yield their wills and lives to Him so they can go and tell about the good news of the Kingdom of God and demonstrate the reality of its existence just like Jesus did. In John 3:2, Nicodemus recognized that God was using Jesus when he said, “……no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him.” In John 3:5 Jesus said, “…no one can enter the Kingdom of God unless he is born of water (repent and be baptized) and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.” In other words, the same way a person is not alive to this earthly realm until he is born into it, he is not alive to the spirit realm until he is born into it. In John 3:31, John the Baptist said, “…the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth.” In John 3:27 he said “A man can receive only what is given him from heaven.” Jesus instructed His disciples as to how they would receive from heaven. In John 16:13 He said, “But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on His own; He will speak only what He hears, and He will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to Me by taking from what is Mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is Mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is Mine and make it known to you.” The empowerment of men by the Holy Spirit’s indwelling was not just for the 12 Apostles or the first century believers. In John 17:20 Jesus said, “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in Me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as You are in Me and I am in You. May they also be in Us so that the world may believe that You have sent Me. I have given them the glory that You gave Me…..”

So, God wants to demonstrate the reality of Himself through people who are willing to be used by Him, just the way He used Jesus, Who is the Savior and exact pattern of how God wants to use “the many brothers” of whom Jesus was the Firstborn. For a person to be used by God in a supernatural way that manifests the glory of God, one must be filled and empowered by the Holy Spirit. In accordance with what Jesus said in John 3:5, Peter, in Acts 2:38-39 said, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the Name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off – for all whom the Lord our God will call.” Jesus stated clearly in Luke 11:9-13, “So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks the door will be opened. Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!” The words of Jesus can be taken to “the bank” and He will send the Holy Spirit. He won’t send a “snake” (something from the devil) or a “scorpion” (something scary). The Holy Spirit comes in at our invitation and our asking as God sends Him. He does not take adverse possession of us, but possesses us for God’s purposes as we yield our wills to God’s will and allow the Holy Spirit to use us.

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The “army of God” is a volunteer army and we can only know where to go, what to say, when and how to say or do it as we hear our King, Jesus tell us by His Holy Spirit. When we ask God with an earnest heart (and God knows every heart) to fill us with His Holy Spirit, The Holy Spirit will manifest His presence within us, just as He did in the believers at Pentecost. Acts 2:4 says, “All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.” Jesus had told His disciples before He was taken up to heaven in Mark 16:17 “And these signs will accompany those who believe in My name: they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues;” When Peter went to the house of Cornelius to tell of the good news that “God did not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right…” (Acts 10:35), “While Peter was still speaking these words the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.” (Acts10:44-46). When the Holy Spirit comes, He manifests Himself, as a sign to the believer that He is indeed there. He manifests Himself in a supernatural way, in one of His Gifts, usually by speaking in tongues or in prophecy along with praises to God. The Holy Spirit is the “deposit” Jesus has put in our hearts, guaranteeing what is to come (II Cor. 1:22), and the “seal” with which His believers are marked, guaranteeing our inheritance in Him (Eph. 1:13-14).

This “seal”, or manifest evidence of the Holy Spirit’s indwelling presence was so important to Paul that, in Acts 19:1-6, when He went to Ephesus he found some disciples there and asked them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? They answered, ‘No we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.’ So Paul asked, ‘Then what baptism did you receive?’ ‘John’s baptism’, they replied. Paul said, ‘John’s baptism is a baptism of repentance.’ He told the people to believe in the One coming after him, that is, in Jesus. On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. There were about twelve men in all.” In Acts 8:15, Peter and John went to Samaria because the Samaritans had accepted the word of God which Phillip had spoken to them. “When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.” The Holy Spirit takes from what is in the heart and mind of our Lord Jesus and makes it known to us. The Holy Spirit is the “still, small voice” coming from Jesus. He is the empowerment of the actions God desires to bring forth, both sovereignly and through His people who are yielded to Him for His purpose.

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The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy (Rev. 19:10). His testimony is what He has spoken, what He now speaks, and all that He will speak. He still speaks through the prophets, but He speaks to every individual. On the mount of transfiguration, when Moses and Elijah appeared with Jesus in front of Peter, James and John, it was a sign from God to the disciples that what Moses (the “Law”) had written and Elijah (the “Prophets”) had spoken, attested to the coming of Jesus Christ. When the disciples looked again, they saw only Jesus and they heard God’s voice saying, “This is My Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased. Listen to Him.” (Matt. 17:1-5). The coming of Jesus brought the One and Only Sacrifice that restored our ability to have relationship with God. That relationship is One-on-one. The only priest between us and God is Jesus Christ, the High Priest Who ever lives. He said in John 14:15, “If you love Me, you will obey what I command.” Jesus was not just speaking of the Ten Commandments, but of the commands that He would send to each of us (His testimony) by His Holy Spirit. In John 16:7 Jesus said, “Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.” And in John 16:13-15 Jesus said, “But when He, the Spirit of Truth comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on His own; He will speak only what He hears, and He will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to Me by taking from what is Mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is Mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is Mine and make it known to you.”

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit are the nine Gifts which Paul instructed about in I Corinthians 12. In verse 1, Paul said he didn’t want the believers to be ignorant about the Gifts…..we are to be discipled and taught how to be used responsibly by the Holy Spirit in all of His nine Gifts that are for any Spirit-filled believer who will allow Him to use them. The Gifts are: Word of Knowledge, Word of Wisdom, Special Faith, Healing, Miracles, Prophecy, Discerning of spirits, Tongues and Interpretation of Tongues. All of these Gifts are the work of One and the same Spirit, and He gives them to each one, just as He determines, for the common good, or the good of all (I Cor. 1:1-11). These 9 Gifts are given to EACH one. They are for all the believers, so God can use any one of us, anywhere, anytime He sees an occasion arise to manifest His power for someone’s benefit and for His glory. For example, when He uses a believer to heal someone with the Gift of Healing, the person who receives the healing is greatly benefited, knows that it is not something within a human being’s natural ability to do, realizes that God is real and gives Him thanks and praise for it. Jesus said, “The miracles I do in My Father’s name speak for Me…” (John 10:25) and “Believe Me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves.” (John 14:11). The Gifts of the Holy Spirit are manifestations in the natural realm, in ways that man can see as being beyond human ability to do, which show that God is real. The Gifts make believers out of people. They always have and they always will accompany moves of God in the earth.

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Remember, Paul in I Cor. 12:1 has said that we are not to be ignorant about spiritual gifts. The Gifts of the Holy Spirit, Who does not change, are still exhibited through yielded believers. As believers, we are also to know how those spiritual gifts work and how God wants to use us to manifest those gifts. Remember, He has called us to be His sons (Romans 9:26, John 1:12). In Romans 8:14, Paul clearly says, “because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.” God wants us to “Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy.” (I Cor. 14:1). “…everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort.” (I Cor. 14:3) and “Therefore, my brothers, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues.” (I Cor. 14:39). I believe the reason that Paul repeated the importance of the manifestation of the gifts of tongues and prophecy is precisely because they are important to God, or they would not be the primary evidence of the infilling of the Holy Spirit in a believer. So, God has restored relationship with people because that is why He created man in the first place….to have on-going One-on-one relationship with us by manifesting Himself to us and through us. WOW!!! What an amazing thing that He loves us that much! “What is man that You are mindful of him?” It is amazing to think that the Creator of the universe wants to use us.

In addition to the nine Gifts mentioned above, there are seven Gifts which God sends by the Holy Spirit that are given to individuals. These Gifts motivate them in their need to seek out others in the body of Christ with whom they can function in the unity of the Holy Spirit. They are prophesying, serving, teaching, encouraging, contributing/giving, leadership/governing and showing mercy. These are gifts of grace (God’s ability within someone to do what could not be done in the natural ability) and are to be practiced by the individual, in proportion to the faith that person has to function in the gifts. They are to meet the needs of the corporate body. The Gifts are from God and by His power, and are exercised through individuals who must not become prideful or self-righteous because the Gifts don’t come from the individual or belong to the individual. The Gifts come from God and belong to Him. The Gifts are given by God to individuals as they yield themselves to Him for the benefit of the body and to accomplish the purposes of God. Individuals having these Gifts operating within them should not refuse to let God use the Gifts through them or deny that they exist within them. To do so grieves the Holy Spirit.

The seven Gifts which come by the Holy Spirit to the corporate Body to jointly fit it together are Gifts of Ministry/Service. These gifts are poured out by the Holy Spirit when the individual members are in the “unity of the Holy Spirit”. Unity comes by listening to what Jesus is saying to them (the testimony of Jesus) and being obedient to come alongside one another as He leads individuals into working together to accomplish His purpose. The Gifts in I Cor.12:28-31 Paul

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instructs that, “…in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. 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.” These gifts are brought by the Holy Spirit so God’s purposes can come to pass when the job is bigger than an individual believer is able to handle. These gifts are the “glue” that make the corporate Body work in one accord and function properly. All of these gifts need to be operating in a group of believers or the group won’t be able to function to accomplish the group’s purpose. That “body” will be “crippled” or “blind” or “physically disabled” in some way. Or, it may be “sick” and greatly hindered in its ability to function. In I Cor. 10:16-17 it says, “Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.” In I Cor. 11:29-30 says, “For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep .”

God has shown us in these verses why many of the corporate “bodies” may not be fulfilling their purpose in God. When there are a lot of sick or dying people in a particular group of believers it may be a “symptom” that there are members who are eating the bread and drinking the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner and are guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. These people within the particular body may not be examining themselves in the light of the conviction of the Holy Spirit before eating of the bread and drinking of the cup. Anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. (I Cor. 11:27-29) It could also indicate that the top leadership in that “sick” body is where the problem lies, since the whole body will be affected if one part is sick or hurting. Corporate repentance is necessary in such cases before the whole body can function as it should in the unity of the Holy Spirit. There may be obvious sin going on in people’s lives, but there may be sin which is the result of error. Psalm 19:12-13 says, “Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults. Keep Your servant also from willful sins.” Unforgiveness is probably one of the biggest sins, or “hidden faults” in the body of Christ. If we don’t forgive others, unconditionally, how can we expect to be forgiven.

Another thing which can keep a corporate group of believers from functioning in the Holy Spirit’s Gifts of Service and Ministry is when the leader(s) of the group refuse to delegate the authority to others to whom God has given the gifts which will enable the whole group to

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function properly. It may be envy which causes the refusal or the fear of loss of control. The main problem stems from the leadership thinking that the calling on the group is “their” ministry. It is not. It is God’s ministry through the people He has placed there. The Holy Spirit brings the anointing/grace/gifting of God to accomplish God’s intended purpose through a group as the leadership yields to the Holy Spirit. In Acts 5:32 Peter said to the religious leaders, “We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, Whom God has given to those who obey Him.” Obedience to what God wants done is essential. Leadership needs to yield to God’s agenda. God does not yield to leadership’s agenda. If leadership refuses to freely allow these gifts to flow in their corporate group, God will “move on” and give the ministry assignment to another group of believers who will yield to His will and allow His Spirit to bring unity and therefore, His purpose to pass.

There is a danger for leadership that looms much larger than just “grieving” the Holy Spirit by resisting the will of God. Some leadership has called the manifestations of the Holy Spirit “from the devil” or “not of God”. In Acts 7:51-53, Stephen, who was being stoned said to the high priest, “You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit! Was there ever a prophet your fathers did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered Him – you who have received the law that was put into effect through angels but have not obeyed it.” The religious leaders saw Jesus cast out demons and said that the power he used to do it was from the devil. Jesus said, “….if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.” Then Jesus went on to tell them that, ”…every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.” (Matt. 12:25-32). Religious spirits have always come against the things of God. They still do. God has forgiven those who blasphemed and crucified His Son. He will not forgive those who blaspheme His Holy Spirit. One of the definitions of “blaspheme” is “to approach or treat with disrespect”. Let us be very careful in deciding for ourselves, apart from the leading of the Holy Spirit, what is of God and His Holy Spirit and what is not. After all, God did not become God because man decided it was so. He does not need man’s “approval” of Him or what He does or how He does it. When He sent His Son, it was the perfect example of this. Man did not recognize Who He was when He was born and came to Israel and Judah. If we are not listening with spiritual ears and watching with spiritual eyes we could miss Him again. He does not need to come the way we expect Him.

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There are five Ascension Gifts that come by the Holy Spirit. They are the Gifts which our Lord Jesus operated in as Head of the Church before He ascended to heaven. After He ascended, He apportioned these Gifts to individuals who are willing to lay their lives down to serve in these ministries so that the Bride of Christ can come into maturity. God gave, by His grace, “Parenting Gifts” to the body of Christ to “train up” His sons in the “way they should go”, just as He gave individual mothers and fathers the grace to do that with their children. These giftings are for apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. In Psalm 68:18, David, prophesying by the Holy Spirit said, “When You ascended on high, You led captives in Your train; You received gifts from men, even from the rebellious – that You, O Lord God, might dwell there.” In Ephesians 4:7-8 it says, “But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says: ‘When He ascended on high, He led captives in His train and gave gifts to men.’” There is a difference in these scriptures, even though Psalm 68:18 is being quoted in Ephesians 4:8 as a written word from the Old Testament prophetically pointing to this time of Christ’s ascension to heaven. In the Psalm it says that He led captives in His train and “received” gifts from men. The gifts that He received from men, after they had been “captivated” by the understanding of Who He is, was their bodies as living sacrifices, because His “train filled the temple” (Isaiah 6:1) and their bodies were and are the temple. In Ephesians it says, He led captives in His train and “gave” gifts to men. His five ascension gifts were given, as an exchange, to those who had given their bodies to Him as a living sacrifice, and who were now His temple and a part of His Body in the earth.

There are leaders in the body of Christ who have taken a decidedly worldly view of these Ascension gifts and have tried to adapt them as being “titles” by which to “rule over” the laiety (Nicolaitans). In fact, as stated above, these Gifts are “job descriptions” and Gifts which the Lord sent to serve His people. The “Fivefold” ministry gifts, as they are popularly called, are parenting gifts. They are to train up and prepare and mature God’s people for works of service, so that the Body of Christ may be built up until it is mature, and in unity as a corporate “Body” having a mature knowledge of the Son of God and attaining to the whole measure of Christ’s fullness (Eph. 4:12-13). These gifts are to “parent” the Bride of Christ, just as Mary and Joseph were to parent Jesus. The people whom God entrusts with the parenting Gifts are to remember that it is their job to watch over, nurture and train the children of God. The spiritual children aren’t sent to serve the Fivefold ministry. The Fivefold ministry is sent to serve the children to bring them into the Father’s Kingdom purpose. Jesus was very clear in His charge to His disciples about those whom He has put in charge. In Matthew 20:25-28 Jesus said, “…whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant…..”. In Matthew 24:45-46 He said, “Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of

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the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns.” In Luke 12:42-46, Jesus makes it plain that any “managers”, or Fivefold Ministers who have been put in charge of providing His servants with what they need, if they are not found doing what He told them to do when He returns, they will be assigned the same reward as an unbeliever. This is a very serious admonition. To whom much has been entrusted, much is required. In Matthew 23:8, Jesus instructed that “…you are not to be called ‘Rabbi’ (titles) for you have only one Master and you are all brothers.” Jesus is the Head…..the Fivefold Ministry is the “shoulders” in the body of Christ……all are under Jesus and no other men. As “shoulders” they are all on the same level. The “Seven Woes” in Matthew 23 are, I believe, in these times are directed to those who operate in the Seven Gifts of Ministry/Service in the corporate bodies of believers. These comments from Jesus were directed at the priests and ministry of the time in Judah. There is no doubt about how the Father feels about those ministers, since Jesus only said what He heard His Father say!

If you are seeking God to have Him bring you into the fullness of all that you can be, ask Him for the infilling of His Holy Spirit. Ask Him to put you in the church or place of learning and training where He wants to train you up. If the church you attend does not believe that the Holy Spirit is still the same today as He was in the first century and has always been, find a church or place of learning where they do believe it. Not only that, but where the leadership allows the Holy Spirit to move through people in the church services, and encourages and disciples the people to hear from God for themselves and to learn to be used by God in the Gifts which the Holy Spirit brings to them and through them by God’s grace. If the leadership in a particular church has only a “form of godliness, but is denying the power” of God to have its way in their fellowship and services and among the people there, then flee that place and ask God to lead you to a place where the power and presence of God is being manifested. The Kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power (I Cor. 4:20). The Kingdom of God is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Ro. 14:17). Because, unless our righteousness surpasses that of legalistic leaders in their practice of the doctrines of men, we will not enter the Kingdom of heaven (Mat. 5:20).