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The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit (T-U)

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DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (T-U)

T. THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS (PART ONE)

General Introduction

- Definition of a spiritual gift:
It is a supernatural ability given by Christ through the Holy Spirit to each believer at the moment of his or her salvation (Eph. 4:4-8).
- The distinction between the *gift* of the Spirit and the *gifts* of the Spirit:
 1. The *gift* occurred at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came to answer the promise of Christ (Acts 1:4, 5, 8). In essence the gift would be the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38; Eph. 4:30).
 2. The *gifts* refer to those supernatural abilities imparted to all believers.
- The distinction between gifts and talents:
 1. A natural talent is given by God the Father (Jas. 1:17) through one's parents at the time of his or her physical birth to benefit mankind on the natural level.
 2. A spiritual gift is given by God the Son (Eph. 4:8) through the Holy Spirit at the time of his or her spiritual birth to benefit mankind on the spiritual level.
- The purpose of the spiritual gifts:
 1. A two-fold general purpose:
 - a. That God might receive the most amount of glory (Eph. 3:21)
 - b. That His elect might receive the most amount of good (Rom. 8:28)
 2. A two-fold specific purpose:
 - a. They are given to magnify the Son of God (Rev. 4:11).
 - b. They are given to edify the saints of God (Eph. 4:12, 13).
- The number of the spiritual gifts:
There are at least 18, as listed by the apostle Paul in three chapters (Rom. 12; 1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4).
- The classification of the spiritual gifts:
 1. The sign gifts
 - a. Apostleship
 - b. Prophecy
 - c. Miracles
 - d. Healing
 - e. Tongues
 - f. Interpretation of tongues

- g. Knowledge
- 2. The stewardship or serving gifts
 - a. Wisdom
 - b. Discernment of spirits
 - c. Giving
 - d. Exhortation
 - e. Ministering
 - f. Mercy showing
 - g. Ruling, administration
 - h. Faith
 - i. Teaching
 - j. Evangelism
 - k. Pastor/teacher
- The duration of the spiritual gifts:

Are all the 18 spiritual gifts, especially the sign gifts, in operation today? As might be expected, there are two very different views regarding this question:

 1. Some would say YES!
 - a. Based on some of Jesus' final words (Mk. 16:17, 18)

Here the argument is all future believers have been promised that these gifts will also accompany their ministry.
 - b. Based on Jesus' words during the Last Supper (Jn. 14:12)

At this time Jesus promised His disciples would be able to do even greater works than He had done! Surely miracles, etc. were included among these "greater works."
 - c. Based on Rom. 11:29

"For God's gifts and His call are irrevocable" (NIV)
 - d. Based on 1 Cor. 13:10

"But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." This verse, we are told, teaches all the spiritual gifts will continue until the Second Coming of Christ.
 - e. Based on Heb. 13:8

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."
 - f. At first glance this verse would seem to prove that all the spiritual gifts are in operation today! This may be the strongest argument for the continuation of the gifts! In other words, if Jesus once instructed the Holy Spirit to impart all the gifts to believers (He did; see Eph 4:7, 8), and He never changes (He doesn't), then how can it be said some of the gifts are not for today? See also Heb. 1:10-12; Jas. 1:17.

2. Some would say NO!

a. Based on the distinction between the *person* of God, and the *program* of God: His person of course never changes (Heb. 13:8), but His program often does. For example, God's program once called for believers to enter an ark, and centuries later, to sacrifice lambs in the Jerusalem temple. But today God's program does not include these things.

b. Based on the function of the sign gifts (miracles, tongues, prophecy, etc.):

They were originally given to validate the divine authority of both Jesus (Jn. 3:2; 20:30, 31; Mt. 10:1, 7, 8; 11:2-5), and that of His disciples (Rom. 15:18; 2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:4).

c. Based on the permanent indwelling and teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:26; 16:13; 1 Jn. 16:13):

d. Based upon the present day High Priestly ministry of the ascended Christ:

"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them . . . For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Heb. 7:25; 9:24).

e. Based upon the all-sufficiency of the completed Bible:

"And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:15, 16).

The apostle undoubtedly had both Old Testament and New Testament scriptures in mind here. In glowing terms he summarizes the supreme goal of God's Word, offering the Scriptures to be totally sufficient in the following areas:

(1) *Doctrine*—The Bible may be used as the perfect textbook to present the systematic teachings of the great truths relating to God Himself.

(2) *Reproof*—The Bible is to be used to convict us of the wrong in our lives.

(3) *Correction*—The Bible will then show us the right way.

(4) *Instruction in righteousness*—The Bible provides all the necessary details which will allow a Christian to become fully equipped for every good work.

Thus, the second argument says that inasmuch as we have (1) the Scriptures of God before us, (2) the Spirit of God within us, and (3) the Son of God interceding for us, then what possible need would there be for the sign gifts?

- The extent of the spiritual gifts
 1. Each believer has at least one (and probably more) of the spiritual gifts.
 - a. According to Paul (Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 7:7; 12:7, 11; 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6)
 - b. According to Peter (1 Peter 4:10)
 2. No believer possesses all the gifts (1 Cor. 12:29, 30)
 3. Thus, in light of this—
 - a. To claim that one possesses *all* the gifts is to defy the decision of the Spirit.
 - b. To claim that one possesses *none* of the gifts is to deny the decision of the Spirit.
- The abuse of the spiritual gifts

There are three ways this abuse can occur:

 1. By not using those gifts imparted to us

Paul's younger co-worker Timothy apparently needed the apostle's admonition regarding this matter, for he refers to it on two specific occasions (see 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6)
 2. By attempting to use these gifts not imparted to us
 - a. Korah did this, attempting to usurp Moses' authority (Num. 16:3).
 - b. Uzziah did this, attempting to occupy the office of a priest (2 Chron. 26:16-21; Heb. 5:4)
 - c. False prophets attempted to prophesy in Jeremiah's day (Jer. 14:14; 23:21; 27:15; 29:9)
 - d. False apostles attempted to exercise the office of a true apostle in Paul's day (2 Cor. 11:13)
 - e. Sceva attempted to have the gift of exorcism in Ephesus (Acts 19:14-16)
 - f. Jesus Himself set the record straight during His vine and branches dialogue (Jn. 15:16)
 3. By not using those gifts in love (1 Cor. 13:1; Phil. 1:12-18)

U. THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS (PART TWO)

The Gift of Apostleship

“And God hat set some in the church, first apostles . . . ” (1 Cor. 12:28a)

“And he gave some, apostles . . . ” (Eph. 4:11a)

- The definition involved
A reference to certain men divinely called and endued with special power to function along with the prophets as the foundational structure of the newly created church.
- The importance involved
According to the apostle Paul, the very household of God is built upon the apostles and prophets, with Christ Himself being the Cornerstone (Eph. 2:14-22).
- The distinction involved
 1. Here a distinction should be made between an apostle (literally, “one sent forth”), and a disciple (meaning, “a learner”). Thus, while all the apostles (with the exception of Judas Iscariot) were disciples, not all the disciples were apostles. Note the following account:
“From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?” (Jn. 6:66, 67)
 2. The book of Acts often refers to disciples who were not apostles (Acts 9:25; 11:26, 29; 13:52; 14:22; 18:23; 19:1; 20:1, 7; 21:4, 16).
 3. Paul refers to at least 500 such disciples (1 Cor. 15:6).
- The number involved
 1. The original twelve
“And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles (Lk. 6:13).
 2. Matthias
“And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles”(Acts 1:26).
 3. Paul
“Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God . . . For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office” (Rom. 1:1; 11:13).
 4. Barnabas
“Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out” (Acts 14:14).
 5. James, the half-brother of Christ
“Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord’s brother” (Gal. 1:18, 19).

- The requirements involved

The all-important requirement is the person must have seen the resurrected Christ.

 1. As testified to by Simon Peter: On three separate occasions Peter affirms this fact—
 - a. Before the 120 (Acts 1:21, 22)
 - b. Before the Sanhedrin (Acts 5:30-32)
 - c. Before Cornelius (Acts 10:38-41)
 2. As testified by the apostle Paul (1 Cor. 9:1)
- The supernatural power involved

Many miracles were performed by the apostles (Acts 5:12; 2 Cor. 12:12).

The Gift of Prophecy

“Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith” (Rom. 12:6).

“By the same Spirit . . . to another prophecy” (1 Cor. 12:9, 10).

“And he gave some . . . prophets” (Eph. 4:11).

- The definition involved

This gift seemed to be two-fold in nature:

 1. It involved *forthtelling*, that is, having *insight* to rebuke current evil.

The Apostle Paul, also a prophet, often exercised this aspect of prophecy.

 - a. As seen by his letter to the church in Rome (Rom. 16:17, 18)
 - b. As seen by his letter to the church in Corinth (1 Cor. 3:1-4)
 - c. As seen by his letter to the churches in Galatia (Gal. 1:6; 3:1, 2)

In these instances Paul “tells it like it is,” severely chastening those three assemblies for (1) divisions, (2) carnal immaturity, and (3) sheer legalism.
 2. It involved *foretelling*, that is, having *foresight* to reveal coming events.

Thus:

 - a. He predicts the final day religious apostasy (1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 3:1; 4:3, 4)
 - b. He predicts the future two-fold coming of Christ
 - (1) His pre-tribulational appearance (1 Cor. 15:51-53; 1 Thess. 4:13-17)
 - (2) His post-tribulational appearance (2 Thess. 1:7-9)
- The importance involved

Here a reference is made in regards to the sheer amount of biblical space given over to prophecy. Consider:

1. All but four of the 66 biblical books contain predictive information.
2. Some of these books are almost all prophetic in nature.
 - a. O. T. books: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel
 - b. N. T. books: 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 2 Peter, Jude, Revelation
 - c. Thus, nearly one-third of the 1189 chapters are written in prophetic format. This would include prophecies which have already been fulfilled, are being fulfilled, or will be fulfilled.
- The blessing involved (Rev. 1:3; 22:7)
- The admonition involved (1 Thess. 4:13)
- The promises involved: In a word, God has promised to reveal the future to us.
 1. As testified to by David (Psa. 25:14)
 2. As testified to by Daniel (Dan. 2:28)
 3. As testified to by Amos (Amos 3:7)
 4. As testified to by John (Rev. 1:1)
 5. As testified to by the Savior Himself (Mt. 11:25; Lk. 8:10)
- The benefits involved: Why study prophecy?
 1. It promotes holy living (Titus 2:12, 13; 2 Peter 3:11-13; 1 John 3:23)
 2. It offers comfort in the hour of distress (1 Thess. 4:18; 5:11; Titus 2:13; 1 Peter 1:6-9); James 1:2-4, 12)
 3. It guarantees the story will have a happy ending (Rev. 21:1-4; Rom. 8:18).
 4. It helps us in the understanding of current events:
 - a. As seen in the political arena. For decades now the world's most troublesome area is in Israel and the surrounding Middle East countries. Statesmen are asking, what's going on here? Why is it happening at this time? What does the future hold? Will there ever be peace in this area? The answers to these questions may be found by examining the following scriptural prophetic passages (Isa. 66:7-9; Ezek. 37-39; Zech. 12:2; Mt. 24:32-34).
 - b. As seen in the religious arena:
 Surely all evangelicals living in America will readily (and sadly) agree that there has been an unceasing and unprecedented all-out attack on even basic morality in general, and specifically, the Christian faith! Does the Bible warn of this? It does indeed as predicted by—
 - (1) Jesus (Lk. 18:8; Mt. 24:5, 11, 24)
 - (2) Paul (1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Tim. 3:1-7; 4:1-4)
 - (3) Peter (2 Peter 2:1; 3:3, 4)
 - (4) Jude (1:3, 4)

5. Finally, it provides assurance and confidence in reference to the return of Jesus Christ. To explain:

During His earthly life Jesus literally fulfilled every one of the 43 O. T. prophecies in regards to the Messiah. So then, if all prophecies concerning Jesus' first coming have been fulfilled, we have every right to assume every prophecy dealing with His second coming will likewise be fulfilled.

Thus, the gift of prophecy was an extremely vital one. In fact, as we have already noted, Paul informs us the very household of God itself has been built upon the apostles and prophets! See Eph. 2:19-22.

The Gift of Miracles

"And in the church God has appointed . . . workers of miracles (1 Cor. 12:28, NIV).

- The definition involved: The gift of miracles is the supernatural ability to perform those events outside and beyond the realm of nature, the ability to temporarily set aside the regular laws of nature.
- The purpose involved: As has been previously discussed, miracles, along with the other sign gifts served to validate both the message and the messenger. See Jn. 3:1, 2.
- The miracle workers involved: The following N. T. individuals were given the gift of miracles:
 1. The twelve apostles (Acts 2:43; 5:12)
 2. Peter (Acts 3:2-7; 9:32-42)
 3. Stephen (Acts 6:8)
 4. Philip (Acts 8:6)
 5. Paul and Barnabas (Acts 14:3, 12; 19:11)

The Gift of Healing

" . . . to another the gift of healing by the same Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:9)

- The definition involved: It involved the supernatural ability to cure human ills, whether of physical, mental, or demonic origin.
- The healers involved:

The following N. T. individuals had the gift of healing—

 1. Peter

- a. Healing a cripple (Acts 3:1-8)
- b. Healing many in Jerusalem (Acts 5:14-15)
- c. Healing Aeneas (Acts 9:22-35)
- d. Raising Dorcas (Acts 9:39-41)
- 2. Paul
 - a. Raising Eutychus (Acts 20:9-12)
 - b. Healing many on the Isle of Melita (Acts 28:7-9)
- The time element involved: Some believe (but of course not all) that healing, along with the other sign gifts were gradually being phased out at the completion of the N. T. For example, Paul became limited in his healing abilities:
 1. As seen in his own affliction (2 Cor. 12:7-10)
 2. As seen in the case of Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:27)
 3. As seen in the case of Timothy (1 Tim. 5:23)
 4. As seen in the case of Trophimus (2 Tim. 4:20)
- The clarification involved: If the gifts of miracles and healing were temporary, does this mean that God does not heal today? It does not! Those who might not believe in divine **healers** would certainly believe in divine **healing!** Many feel James spells out God's plan for healing today in his epistle: See James 5:14-16.

The Gift of Tongues

" . . . to another . . . divers kinds of tongues? (1 Cor. 12:10)

"And God hath set . . . in the church . . . tongues" (1 Cor. 12:28).

- Passage referring to tongues
 1. Unknown in the Old Testament:

Some would suggest tongues are in view when certain individuals were said to have prophesied, such as:

 - a. Israel's 70 elders (Num. 11:25)
 - b. King Saul (1 Sam. 10:5-11; 19:20-24)
 - c. The priests of Baal (1 Kings 18:29)

However, if this be true, a real difficulty arises, for Saul was an unsaved, God-forsaken man (1 Sam. 28:6), and the Baalite priests were devil worshippers!

In addition, Jesus predicts His disciples would speak *"with new tongues,"* indicating the gift of tongues had not yet been given (see Mark 16:17).

2. Known only in the New Testament:
 - a. The prophetic record (Mk. 16:17)
 - b. The historical record— the three account in Acts:
 - (1) Occurring in Jerusalem (Acts 2:1-4)
 - (2) Occurring in Caesarea (Acts 10:44-47)
 - (3) Occurring in Ephesus (Acts 19:1-7)
 - c. The doctrinal record (1 Cor. 14:5, 13, 27, 28)
- Various views in regards to the nature of tongues: There are (at least) three positions:
 1. It involved the supernatural ability to speak in a previously unlearned human language. Arguments:
 - a. Because the word *glossa* is found 50 times in the Greek New Testament. Of these, 16 times it refers to the physical organ (see James 3:5); once it refers to flames of fires (Acts 2:3); and 33 times it refers to human language.
 - b. Because of the description of the events at Pentecost (Acts 2:6-11). Also, Peter says that the tongues-speaking he witnessed at Caesarea was identical to that at Pentecost (Acts 11:15).
 2. It involved the supernatural ability to speak in a non-human, angelic language. Arguments:
 - a. The tongues-speaking disciples at Pentecost are accused of drunkenness (Acts 2:13), a charge that would not be made if the language was of an earthly nature.
 - b. Because of Paul's words in 1 Cor. 14:2: "*For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him.*"
 - c. Paul had the gift of tongues (1 Cor. 14:18), yet he could not understand the human speech in Lycaonia in Acts 14:11.
 - d. Because of the phrase "other tongues" in Acts 2:4. This is a translation of the Greek word *heteros*, which means "another of a different kind." (See also Gal. 1:6, 7.)
 3. It involved both. Thus:
 - a. The account in Acts 2 refers to unlearned human language.
 - b. The account in 1 Cor. 14 refers to an angelic, non-human language.
- The purpose for the gift of tongues:

Negative—

 1. It was not for church edification (1 Cor. 14:4, 19).
 2. It was not to demonstrate either salvation on Spirit baptism, as refuted by Paul (1 Cor. 12:13; Rom. 6:3, 4; Col. 2:9-12; Eph. 4:5; Gal. 3:27, 28; 1 Cor. 12:13).

Positive:

1. To rebuke unbelieving Israel (1 Cor. 14:21, 22; Isa. 28:11, 12; Jer. 5:15; Acts 2:4, 22, 23, 40)
2. To reveal new truths—When Paul wrote 1 Cor. 14, there was in existence at that time (A.D. 53) only four of the N. T. books (James, Galatians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians). There was no written record available concerning such important issues as:
 - a. The doctrine of the church (later discussed in Ephesians and Colossians)
 - b. The doctrine of justification, sanctification, and glorification (later written about in Romans)
 - c. The doctrine of apostasy (Jude)
 - d. Christian forgiveness (Philemon)
 - e. The priesthood of Christ (Hebrews)
 - f. The life of Christ (4 Gospels)
 - g. Practical Christian service (1 & 2 Peter)
 - h. Christian love (as found in 1, 2, 3 John)
 - i. Advice to pastors and deacons (as discussed in 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus)

The Gift of the Interpretation of Tongues

“ . . . let one interpret . . . ” (1 Cor. 14:28)

- The definition involved: It is the supernatural ability to interpret and clarify those messages spoken by the one who possessed the gift of tongues.
- The two-fold usage involved:
 1. One could interpret his own tongue-speaking (1 Cor. 14:13).
 2. One could interpret another’s tongue-speaking (1 Cor. 14:27).

The Gift of Knowledge

“For to one is given . . . the word of knowledge . . . ” (1 Cor. 12:8).

“And though I have the gift . . . of knowledge . . . ” (1 Cor. 13:2).

“ . . . knowledge shall vanish away . . . ” (1 Cor. 13:8).

“ . . . If I come to you . . . by knowledge . . . ” (1 Cor. 14:6).

“ . . . as ye abound in . . . knowledge . . . ” (2 Cor. 8:7).

- The definition involved: This is, admittedly, one of the least understood of all the spiritual gifts. In an attempt to define it, let us consider both the negative and positive aspects associated with this gift:
 1. A negative consideration:
 - a. Some hold it is simply the twin partners of the gift of wisdom, that is, both sharing opposite sides of the same coin. Thus:
 - (1) Knowledge would involve the supernatural ability to *accumulate* facts.
 - (2) Wisdom would involve the supernatural ability to correctly *apply* those facts.

While the academic world might agree with those definitions, there is a problem in the spiritual realm, for 1 Cor. 13:8 states the gift of knowledge would be phased out.
 - b. It probably is not associated with healing. Those claiming to possess this gift today view it as the supernatural ability to correctly diagnose a disease or ailment by a special revelation and then heal the suffering person. However, none of the five New Testament references to the gift of knowledge refer to healing in the slightest sense of the word!
 2. A positive consideration:
 - a. It may have involved the supernatural ability to receive an *oral* revelation concerning the person of God, another human being, etc. The following examples would seem to testify to this:
 - (1) God revealed to Simon that he would not die until he had seen the Messiah (Lk. 2:26).
 - (2) God revealed to Peter that Jesus was indeed the Son of God (Mt. 16:14, 17).
 - (3) God revealed to Paul the details of the Gospel (Gal. 1:11, 12; also Acts 27:21-25).
 - (4) God revealed to 70 followers of Christ the amazing power and authority of the Gospel message (Lk. 10:17-21).
 - b. It may also have involved the supernatural ability to receive and remit a divine revelation; that is, to *record* one of the 66 books of the Bible. If this indeed be the case, then all the biblical writers possessed the word of know-ledge:
 - (1) Luke did (Lk. 1:3).
 - (2) Paul did (1 Cor. 14:47; 15:15; 2 Peter 3:15, 15).
 - (3) Peter did (1 Peter 5:12; 2 Peter 3:1).
 - (4) John did (1 John 2:12-14; Rev. 1:11, 19).
 - (5) Jude did (Jude 1:3).