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# KEYNOTE

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## A SURVEY OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

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### INTRODUCTION

The church as the body of Christ is a fellowship of believers. Believers are regarded as individual stones which jointly form a spiritual building, whose foundation is the apostles and prophets, Christ himself being the chief corner stone.<sup>1</sup> The relationship of believers within the body of Christ is not only defined by the commonality of spirit, faith, salvation, Lord and baptism,<sup>2</sup> but also by the unique contribution of each individual believer's gift(s) to the whole body. The effective working of the body of Christ requires the proper use of each individual's gift(s). To illustrate this, Paul employed the analogy of the different functions of body organs within the human body, where each organ simultaneously contributes its ability for the good of the whole.<sup>3</sup> This union is so real that when one part of the body suffers the rest suffer with it. In applying this analogy to the church we must bear in mind that the separate body organs are not only representing individual members but also the different gifts (functions) of each individual member.

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are therefore basic to the existence and continuance of the church. Apostolic gifts are foundational to the church's establishment and the other forms of gifts are for the building up of the body of Christ.

Smeaton points this out when he writes that

The rich supply of EXTRAORDINARY GIFTS bestowed at Pentecost was not intended to continue when they had served their purpose in founding the Christian Church. The other GIFTS OF AN ORDINARY CHARACTER were given for the permanent advantage of the Church, and are so essential to her edification, that without them, she would collapse or disappear.<sup>4</sup>

### SOURCE OF GIFTS

The work of bestowing gifts on the church is presented in Scripture as belonging basically to the Holy Spirit. Christ promised that 'another Comforter' would come to be with believers forever<sup>5</sup> and that he would teach the truth, guide them in all matters, remind them of Christ's teachings,<sup>6</sup> and empower them for service.<sup>7</sup> Christ commanded his disciples to wait for "the promise of the Father"<sup>8</sup> in Jerusalem. This promise of the Father is a reference to the Holy Spirit. The events of Pentecost day confirm the coming of the Holy Spirit, who empowered the church to propagate the gospel by supplying them with various gifts to that end. This day was significant in that the Holy Spirit officially took over the administration of the church Christ left. As George Smeaton states, that Pentecost day which was "regarded as the commemoration day of the Sinai Covenant, . . . was a fitting occasion . . . for the removal of the old economy . . . and the espousals day of the Christian church."<sup>9</sup> It is during this occasion that "the Holy Spirit, as the

promised Paraclete, took the place of Christ's corporeal presence."<sup>10</sup>

Various Old Testament passages also attribute the conferment of gifts, both common as well as special abilities, to the Holy Spirit of God. Joseph was said to have the Spirit of God in him who enabled Joseph to interpret Pharaoh's dreams (Gen 41:38). In Exod 31 God testifies that his spirit had given certain abilities to some individuals to help with the construction of the tabernacle.<sup>11</sup> The judges were also empowered by the Spirit in order to carry out their duties, for example, Othniel, Gideon, Jephtha, Samson, and others.<sup>12</sup> The prophets of the OT spoke as the Holy Spirit taught and enabled them.<sup>13</sup> Thus both the OT and the NT testify that the Holy Spirit of God is the one who disseminates gifts to the body of Christ.

It should, however, be borne in mind that the whole Godhead is involved in this work. Just as the work of creation is specially attributed to the Father and as the work of redemption is to the Son, even so is the work of bestowing gifts attributed to the Holy Spirit. As Smeaton points out, "As to divine WORKS, the Father is the source FROM WHICH every operation emanates (*ex hou*), the Son is the medium THROUGH WHICH (*di' hou*) it is performed, and the Holy Ghost is the EXECUTIVE BY WHICH (*en hoi*) it is carried into effect."<sup>14</sup> Hodge agrees when he says, "Thus, the doctrine of the Trinity underlies the whole scheme of redemption in its execution and application as well as in its conception."<sup>15</sup>

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are gracious in nature. The general term used to designate them, *charismata*, derives from the root *charis* which means grace. Thus

these gifts cannot be earned or bought;<sup>16</sup> rather they are dispensed by the sovereign will of the Spirit of God. Scripture clearly mentions that they are given, not earned.<sup>17</sup> Simon the magician was cursed for attempting to buy the power of the Holy Spirit from the apostles. It is a mockery of God, a profaning of holy things and outright blasphemy for anyone to try to induce God to this end or pretend to be gifted in some way he is not. This was a common practice at the time of the Reformation, and it is commonly identified as *Simony*. Some people who were not qualified for the ministry paid money to be appointed to certain offices by the church hierarchy. Reformers sought to correct this abuse of church ordinances.

#### TYPES OF GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The church under the administration of the Holy Spirit is supplied with a variety of gifts, ministries, and other general graces to meet all her duties sufficiently and efficiently. There are basically three major passages where these gifts are listed in the NT, all of which are in Paul's letters: 1 Cor 12:1-11; Eph 4:1-16; and Rom 12:1-8.<sup>18</sup> A careful look at the gifts listed in these passages clearly indicates that the lists are not identical. It thus follows that they are not intended as an exact catalog of gifts. An individual may have a combination of several gifts or even a multiplicity of gifts. For instance, Paul could speak in tongues as well as exercise other gifts.<sup>19</sup> As one writer points out, "Philip had the gifts of wisdom, showing mercy, evangelism, and perhaps others."<sup>20</sup> These gifts are meant to meet specific needs of the church with some needs being continual while others having been temporary.

In 1 Cor 12:4-6, Paul refers to “varieties of spiritual endowments peculiar to the several members of the Church”<sup>21</sup> in three terms. He calls them different gifts (χάρισμα *charisma*), also different ministries (διακονία *diakonia*) and different workings (ἐνέργημα *energema*). It is difficult to prove that Paul is categorizing gifts into three groups because the major lists of gifts in Paul’s writings repeat some of them or even introduce new ones which are of a similar nature. The gifts listed therefore refuse to be rigidly separated. They refuse to be over classified.<sup>22</sup> For instance we must assume that one who has the “gift of prophecy” should at the same time be able to “distinguish between spirits”; yet these two are listed as different gifts. It is for this reason that Charles Hodge and other writers agree that Paul was not categorizing the gifts but rather was giving different aspects of the gifts.

We are not to understand him here as dividing these gifts into three classes, under the heads of gifts, service, and works. He is presenting three different aspects of each and all of them. Viewed in relation to the Spirit, they are gifts; in relation to the Lord, they are acts of service; in relation to God, they are works—that is, effects worked by his power.<sup>23</sup>

#### *Gift of Prophecy*

The Spirit of God bestowed this gift at the inception of NT church. This gift involved the ability to tell events that would come to pass in the near future as well as apocalyptic events. Agabus predicted a famine in Jerusalem, leading the church to send relief to believers there. He also predicted Paul’s arrest.<sup>24</sup> The New Testament also contains the Apocalypse

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in the book of Revelation and portions of Paul’s writings.<sup>25</sup>

In both the OT and NT the gift of prophecy was considered the most important. Prophets were God’s spokesmen, specially inspired by God to infallibly declare his will to the people. They taught the knowledge, worship, and service of God. As such they were given extraordinary gifts to qualify them for that office and make them noticeable. Concerning this authentication Smeaton observes, “These gifts were intended to show men generally, that in receiving their word as a divine message, they were not misled by cunningly devised fables.”<sup>26</sup>

The supernatural gifts, such as the gifts of knowledge, tongue speaking, interpretation of tongues, and working of miracles, were thus apostolic in nature. The gift of knowledge as relates to the apostles was a supernatural endowment whereby one under the supernatural influence of the Spirit “understood fully what they were commissioned to announce . . . beyond the range of the unaided human faculties.” The gifts of tongues speaking and tongue interpretation are closely related to the prophetic gift of the apostles. Tongues proved that the “miracle of inspiration was still present in the church.”<sup>27</sup>

With no apostles today this gift of prophecy, in the apostolic sense, ceased with the completion of the canon. The prophetic office is continued in the preaching of the written Word of God where the truth is infallibly kept for us. The Apostle Peter elevated the Word above his experiences with Christ.<sup>28</sup>

#### *Gift of Tongues*

The gift of tongues refers to the supernatural gift of speaking in foreign languages which one had not learned before. It is a language gift. The Greek word γλῶσσα *glossa* means “language.” Another word for language in the New Testament is δῖλεκτος *dialektos*, and its English equivalent is “dialect” (Acts 1:19, 2:6, 8; 21:40; 22:2; 26:14). Tongues were intelligible languages, not ecstatic nonsensical utterances. That is why the people present on the day of Pentecost were able to hear and understand what was being said by believers who spoke in tongues (Acts 2:9-11).

This gift was given to be a sign to Jews who considered themselves the privileged people of God. God was signaling to the Jews that Gentiles were also partakers of the redemption of God. The Jews had the misconception that they were “the only people to whom God extended salvation.” The event in the life of the early church in Acts 10 and 11 emphasized that tongues speaking greatly influenced the Jewish believers in the early church to accept Gentile believers as being indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God.<sup>29</sup> The miraculous aspect of this gift confirmed to the hearers that God was the author of the new speech<sup>30</sup> as they listened to the message uttered.

#### *Interpretation of Tongues*

This gift was the supernatural ability to understand and interpret the new tongues to the language listeners could understand. It was the ability to explain what was being said. Those with this gift lacked the utterance but possessed the ability to interpret the utterances (1 Cor 14:5). The importance of this gift is emphasized as Paul prioritizes edification of the church. Paul ruled out the use of tongues in the church in the absence of an interpreter.<sup>31</sup> It is implausible for God to communicate his revelation to the church and yet leave the church without understanding what he said to them. This aspect is largely ignored in charismatic circles.

#### *Miraculous Works*

These words refer to the ability to perform deeds that are extraordinary for the purpose of authenticating both the message and the messenger.<sup>32</sup> Some of these signs are miraculous healing through prayer, touching, and in some instances by contact with the shadow of an apostle; raising the dead; and not being hurt by poison (as Paul in Acts 28:3-6). These miraculous works, along with the miraculous gift of knowledge, tongues, interpretation of tongues, were given to authenticate the apostolic ministry.

#### CHURCH OFFICES

The Holy Spirit also gave continuing gifts for the church. These we could call ministries as encapsulated in church offices. The officers of the church are divided into ruling elders, teaching elders, and deacons.

#### *Gift of Governing*

This gift is mentioned in Rom 12:8 as “ruling” and in 1 Cor 12:28 as “governments.” This refers to the special abili-

ties given to some men in the church to administer church affairs. The church as a community requires leadership in decision making in areas such as church ministry, order, and discipline. The word ‘elder’ (*presbuteros*) refers to maturity, sobriety, and wisdom of men gifted for this office in order to carry out their duty effectively. The term bishop (*episkopos*) refers to the administrative aspect of their work. Elders are therefore mature believers who superintend the flock of God, being examples to the flock.<sup>33</sup> In Tim 3:1-13 Paul gives the qualifications of an elder. Some of the listed qualifications are also gifts of God, for instance, the ability to teach. A combination of several other gifts does accompany those called to be ruling elders.

#### *Gift of Teaching*

This gift may be defined as the “ability to explain clearly and apply effectively the truth of the word of God.”<sup>34</sup> Effective communication of the truth, making the truth understandable, and applying the truth effectively are the abilities by which this gift is exercised. A certain level of understanding of the truth is assumed of those who have this gift. We should bear in mind that this is not merely referring to the natural talent of teaching. A talented teacher may not necessarily possess this gift.

Scripture encourages teaching to various groups by various persons. Teaching can be carried out through song;<sup>35</sup> older women can teach younger women and children good things.<sup>36</sup> This gift can be exercised by various members of the church as these verses indicate. However, the office of a teaching elder is specially set apart for the purposes of teaching.<sup>37</sup> Paul left Timothy at Ephesus to ensure

that “no other doctrine” was taught.<sup>38</sup> Thus he was in charge of doctrine in the church. The dogmatic power of the church is carried out through the teaching ministry. One of the highest forms in which this gift is exercised is the formulation of creeds and doctrinal standards of the church. Theological institutions and those who teach therein are also a way by which this gift is exercised.

#### GENERAL GRACES

*Gift of helps* refers to the ability and readiness to lend a hand or assisting. It is listed in I Cor 12:28. It is defined by Flynn as “the Spirit-given ability to serve the church in any supporting role, usually temporal, though sometimes spiritual.”<sup>39</sup> It may involve helping believers who are gifted in certain areas with some task in order to free them up to use their other gifts effectively. This gift is akin to the office of a deacon, and all believers can exercise this gift.

*Hospitality* is also commanded in Scripture.<sup>40</sup> The context in which Peter mentions it implies that it is also a gift (1 Pet 4:9-10). It involves caring for believers in need, especially lodging and feeding them.

*Showing mercy* to the suffering is a Christian imperative and another gift of the Holy Spirit (Rom 12:8). It involves sympathizing and empathizing with the suffering, and doing something to alleviate that suffering. In the NT this gift is exemplified by Dorcas<sup>41</sup> and Onesiphorus.<sup>42</sup> Paul commands that showing mercy be done with cheerfulness.

*Giving* is supposed to be done by all believers. Paul exhorts on giving in 2 Cor 9. It should be done with simplicity.

Generosity, cheerfulness, and for good purposes are the manner in which this gift is to be exercised.

The gifts listed and described here are not exhaustive. What we learn from them is that gifts of the Holy Spirit define the character of the church both as an organization (offices) and as an organism (life of fellowship). For believers to be equipped for the work of the ministry partly means that all believers should identify, develop, and use the gifts they have. 📖

<sup>1</sup> Eph 2:20.

<sup>2</sup> Jude 1:3; Eph 4:4-5; Rom 12:4; 1 Cor 12:13.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor 12:1-11.

<sup>4</sup> George Smeaton, *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1974), 276.

<sup>5</sup> John 14:16.

<sup>6</sup> John 14:26.

<sup>7</sup> Acts 1:8.

<sup>8</sup> Acts 1:4.

<sup>9</sup> George Smeaton, *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, 53.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Exod 31:1-6, “And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, Behold, I, I have called by name Bezaleel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all workmanship, to devise designs; to work in gold, and in silver, and in bronze, and in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all workmanship. And behold, I have given to him Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. And I have put wisdom in the

hearts of all the wise-hearted, so that they may make all that I have commanded you.”

<sup>12</sup> Judg 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 14:6.

<sup>13</sup> Ezek 11:5; 37:1; 1 Pet 1:20-21.

<sup>14</sup> George Smeaton, *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, 4.

<sup>15</sup> Charles Hodge, *1 Corinthians*, The Crossway classic commentaries (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1995), at 1 Cor 12:4.

<sup>16</sup> Act 8:18, “And when Simon saw that the Holy Spirit was given through laying on of the apostles’ hands, he offered them money, saying, Give me this power also, that on whomever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Spirit. But Peter said to him, May your silver perish with you, because you have thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.”

<sup>18</sup> (Rom 12:1-8; 1 Cor 12:1-11; Eph 4:11):

Rom 12:6 - Prophecy

Rom 12:7 - Ministry, Teaching

Rom 12:8 - Exhortation, Giving, Ruling, Showing mercy

1 Cor 12:8 - Word of wisdom, Word of knowledge

1 Cor 12:9 - Faith, Gifts of healing

1 Cor 12:10 - Working of miracles,

Prophecy, Discerning of spirits,

Tongues, Interpretation of tongues

Eph 4:11 - Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and teachers

<sup>17</sup> 1 Cor 12:11; Eph 4:7-8.

<sup>19</sup> 1 Cor 14:18, “I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than you all.”

<sup>20</sup> Leslie B. Flynn, *19 Gifts of the Holy Spirit* (Illinois: Victor Books Publication Inc., 1985), 14.

<sup>21</sup> Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments* (Oak Harbor, Wash.: Logos

Research Systems, Inc., 1997), at 1 Cor 12:4.

<sup>22</sup> “One should be careful not to over define the gifts, because they may resist over-classification,” John MacArthur, *1 Corinthians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996, c1984).

<sup>23</sup> Charles Hodge, *1 Corinthians*, The Crossway Classic Commentaries (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1995), at 1 Cor 12:4.

<sup>24</sup> Acts 11; 21.

<sup>25</sup> 1 Cor 15; 1 Thess (whole epistle).

<sup>26</sup> George Smeaton, *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, 148.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.

<sup>28</sup> 2 Pet 1:18-19, “And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.”

<sup>29</sup> Jeffrey Khoo, *Charismatism Q & A: Biblical Answers to Frequently Asked Questions on Charismatic Phenomenon* (Singapore: Far Eastern Bible College Press), 31-33.

<sup>30</sup> Acts 2:7, “And they were all amazed and marveled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans?”

<sup>31</sup> 1 Cor 14:5, “I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.”

<sup>32</sup> John 4:48; Acts 2:22; Rom 15:19; 2 Cor 12:12; Heb 2:4.

<sup>33</sup> 1 Pet 5:1-3, “The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory

that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being examples to the flock.”

<sup>34</sup> Leslie B. Flynn, *19 Gifts of the Holy Spirit*, p. 74.

<sup>35</sup> Col 3:16.

<sup>36</sup> 2 Tim 1:5; 3:14-15; Titus 2:3.

<sup>37</sup> 1 Tim 5:17, “Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine.”

<sup>38</sup> 1 Tim 1:3, “As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine.”

<sup>39</sup> Leslie B. Flynn, *19 Gifts of the Holy Spirit*, p. 101.

<sup>40</sup> Rom 12:13; Titus 1:8; 1 Tim 3:2; 5:10; Heb 13:2.

<sup>41</sup> Act 9:36, “Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did.”

<sup>42</sup> 2 Tim 1:16-18, “The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain: But, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me. The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well.”

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# EXEGESIS & THEOLOGY

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## THE NEW TESTAMENT PROPHET

CHRISTOPHER K. LENSCH<sup>1</sup>

Bible students are agreed that the New Testament prophet was an office in the church that was a gift from Christ to the church (Eph 4:11), and that those who held this office were gifted by the Holy Spirit for this work. What is not of universal understanding are the questions of whether (1) the office of the prophet continued past apostolic times into our age, and (2) whether Christians who were not acknowledged as holding the office could be gifted to prophesy apart from that office.

This article will maintain that the office of the NT prophet did not continue beyond the apostolic period, and that the early church did not recognize self-proclaimed prophets, at least not those whose prophecies were fallible.

### UNIQUENESS OF THE APOSTOLIC ERA

A major misunderstanding on the part of some Christians has been a failure to recognize that the period of the apostles was determinatively different from subsequent generations of the church. Reading the New Testament, and especially the book of Acts, Christians can rightfully long for the vibrancy of the NT church and even may wish to see manifestations of God's power with his people. However, when post-apostolic Christians try to reduplicate the same supernatural gifts and extraordinary offices, they err in not recognizing the uniqueness of the apostolic era.

First of all, the church offices of apostle and prophet were extraordinary and temporary. This is because these offices were foundational for the establishment of the NT church. Ephesians 2:19-20 is quite explicit about the foundational purpose of these two offices: "...the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone." While mortal sinners held these offices in the early church, it is important to remember that they only could become the foundation for the church because, when they spoke officially for the Lord, they spoke without error.

Expositors differ whether the foundational prophets in view here are OT prophets or NT prophets, or even from both testaments. The preferred interpretation is to take these prophets as NT prophets, especially due to Paul's repetition of the same phrase, "apostles and prophets," a few verses later in Eph 3:5 where the context identifies them as contemporary with the apostles.<sup>2</sup> This connection indicates that the prophets of Eph 2:20 are NT prophets.

The next Pauline reference to NT prophets is in the catalog of NT officers in Eph 4:11: "And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers." There appears to be a hierarchy of order in these offices, lending support to the orthodox belief that the primary offices of apostle and prophet were extraordinary for establishing the church before these temporary offices disappeared. On the other hand, the office of "pastor-teacher,"

and perhaps that of “evangelist,” is not extraordinary and continued into the post-apostolic church.

At the same time, note that NT prophets are distinguished from the apostles in identity. The roles of these two offices overlapped in the function of communicating revelation from God, but Christ’s giving of prophets spread this gift of divine revelation beyond the locale of the limited number of apostles. Still, the apostles were primary in the church, as indicated by the Antiochian church’s appeal to the apostolic-led church in Jerusalem, despite having their own prophets in Antioch (Acts 15:2, cf. 13:1). The church at Antioch would have liked an authoritative answer from its own leaders, but its own prophets recognized that they could only speak authoritatively to the church when God spoke infallibly to them.

While some of the office titles in Eph 4:11 are unique to the NT (apostles and evangelists), two, at least, are found in the OT: prophets and pastors. “Pastor/shepherd” in the OT is a broader descriptive term that encompasses both political and ecclesiastical leaders in Israel.<sup>3</sup> With regard to the biblical prophet, the critical question is whether the function of NT prophets was the same as that of OT prophets. If the role and function is the same, then we may gain an understanding of the NT prophet from the rich prophetic background of the OT. Ecclesiastical continuity from the primitive OT church into the New Testament will also be seen in this bridge.

#### ROOTS OF THE NT PROPHET IN THE OT

Prophets are found in both the Old and New Testaments. The gift of prophecy in the NT is confirmed at Pentecost

when Peter cites an OT prophet who had predicted that a day was coming when

God... will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy (Acts 2:17-18).

Is it possible that the prophet Joel believed that these future prophets of the New Covenant would be serving God in ways strikingly dissimilar to the long tradition of OT prophets from Abraham to John the Baptist?<sup>4</sup> That is not likely. Rather, Joel implies that prophecy will be more universal at the outpouring of the Spirit. And what will God’s NT servants do? “They shall prophesy.”

**The prophets recognized that they could only speak authoritatively to the church when God spoke infallibly to them.**

Without redefining prophecy for his time, Peter corroborates Joel’s expectations that began to unfold on the day of Pentecost. NT prophets prophesied in the classic tradition of speaking for God only when He spoke to them.<sup>5</sup> Contrary to the notion that NT prophecy can be less than OT prophecy, Peter, and for that matter, Luke,<sup>6</sup> understood the role of the NT prophet to be the same as that of the OT prophet.

The NT prophet was not merely a Christian with heightened sensitivities to the Holy Spirit who might speak his sometimes fallible or sometimes accurate predictions based on intuitions prompted by the Spirit in his heart. No, a prophet was a recognized spokesman for the Lord who spoke God's revelation when the Lord directed him to speak.<sup>7</sup> This precludes the possibility of a "secondary type of prophecy with diminished authority,"<sup>8</sup> bringing a fallible message for the church.

It is historically incongruous and theologically inconsistent to suggest a notion of fallible NT prophecies while affirming the reliability of revelations through the OT prophets. Few would dare teach that God-given prophecies in the OT could be subject to error. That approach would undermine the authority and reliability of all the OT prophecies, and it would have made their fallible messengers liable to stoning for not accurately speaking the truth of God!<sup>9</sup>

On the other hand, since there is continuity between the Old and New Testament prophets, one would not expect a cheapening of the role of prophecy whereby the NT prophet may speak divine revelations sometimes, but on other occasions also may utter divine impulses or vague intuitions that he himself can misinterpret in his prophesying. No, the fullness of Pentecost in the apostolic church meant a more universal distribution of spiritual gifts to establish the certainty of the gospel.<sup>10</sup> This wider dispersion of the Spirit's gifts did not mean poorer quality control in prophecy nor the degeneration of the gifts, for any "uncertain sound of the trumpet" would have defeated the purpose of the gifts.

THE PASSING OF THE PROPHETS

**So also, after the NT prophets served their purpose, the prophetic voice fell silent.**

Even before the end of the apostolic era, the exercise of apostolic gifts (2 Cor 12:12) was waning.<sup>11</sup> The foundation had been laid by the apostles and NT prophets, and Christ the Cornerstone was building his church beyond its groundwork. The work is still carried on by missionary church planters and by pastor-teachers who, with other ordinary church officers, have taken over the leadership of the church. This is the same spiritual leadership that the apostles emphasized for themselves when they declared that they needed to be free to give themselves to "prayer and the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4).

After the NT prophets passed with the apostles from the early church, there were occasional attempts to resurrect the earlier Pentecostal gifts and power. The Montanists of the late second century had prophets, but the movement was roundly rejected by the orthodox church because the Montanists charged that the message of the apostolic era was incomplete.

Modern claims of alleged continuing revelation in the church take a subtler approach. Charismatics practice a broadly-defined "word of knowledge," a spiritual gift that is distinguished from the gift of prophecy in 1 Cor 12:8-10. Others in the so-called "Third Wave" of the

church<sup>12</sup> encourage prophetic utterances that may be fully or partially fallible due to the mixture of human and divine impressions in the utterance, even though these are allegedly at the prompting of the Holy Spirit. The test is in the congregation's response to know how much is from God. This approach well fits the spirit of the post-modern age by blending a subjective neo-orthodox-like interpretation with a disregard for the objective truth of Scripture.

#### CONCLUSION

God sent special messengers and gave his revelations at key periods in sacred history. After the time of Malachi there were no prophets or revelations for 400 years until the coming of John the Baptist.<sup>13</sup> So also, after the NT prophets served their purpose, the prophetic voice fell silent. John's apocalypse, as the last canonical prophecy (Rev 1:3), looks forward to the resumption of prophecy at the end of the age when two prophets (Rev. 11:3) with charismatic authority finally appear. At that juncture in history God once again will reveal his purposes through his servants the prophets. 📖

<sup>1</sup> This article is a revision of a similar one first published in the *Journal of Modern Ministry*, 4:2 (Spring 2007): 147-153.

<sup>2</sup> Eph 3:5: "...the mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel." Daniel

Wallace offers further reasons why these are NT prophets in *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1996), 285-286.

<sup>3</sup> There is no need to prove the office of the prophet in the OT. "Pastor" in the OT is a term often used to represent Israel's political leaders (Ezek 34) and occasionally its spiritual/ecclesiastical leaders as in Jer 23. Disobedient prophets and priests in this chapter are represented as false shepherds. Significantly, the role of the shepherds/pastors in Jer 3:15 is to feed the flock with knowledge, suggesting a parallel to the NT pastor who serves as a teacher (Eph 4:11).

<sup>4</sup> God calls Abraham a prophet in Gen 20:7.

<sup>5</sup> The OT is replete with condemnations of self-styled prophets who speak fallibly when God has not sent them to speak for Him. A prophet is God's called spokesman (Deut 18:18-22; cf. Exod 7:1-2).

<sup>6</sup> In the book of Acts Luke uses the title of "prophet" for both OT prophets and for NT prophets without qualifying his usage. See George W. Knight's *Prophecy in the NT* (Dallas: Presbyterian Heritage Publishers, 1988), note on p. 4.

<sup>7</sup> When a controversy arose at Antioch, the prophets there did not offer fallible impressions but remained silent because the Spirit was silent (cf. Acts 15:2).

<sup>8</sup> These are the words of Wayne Grudem in *The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1999), p. 262.

<sup>9</sup> Deut 18:20-22 says that some will speak "presumptuously" in God's name. A key prophetic test guarding against human presumption in proph-

ecy is fulfillment of short-term predictions. If the prophet's words do not come to pass, he is not speaking for God, but for other gods or for himself, and therefore must be put to death.

This same passage affirms that Jesus, the Messenger of the covenant (Mal 3:1), was a prophet in the model of the Mosaic tradition, implying that other new covenant prophets after Pentecost were similar to their OT counterparts.

<sup>10</sup> Biblical sign miracles are the means for establishing God's message and messengers: John 20:30-31 and 2 Cor 12:12.

<sup>11</sup> When Paul was jailed in Rome he apparently did not heal Epaphroditus even though this servant was a great comfort to him (Phil 2:25-27).

<sup>12</sup> The flagship of the Third Wave is the Vineyard Church, and it finds support in the early scholarship of Dr. Grudem. F. David Farnell notes that Dr. Grudem recently has tempered his position compared to his earlier claims of two kinds of NT prophecy allowing error in secondary, non-authoritative prophecies, *The Masters Seminary Journal* (Fall 2003) 241.

<sup>13</sup> 1 Macc 4:44-46 records that after the temple abomination of Antiochus Epiphanes, the religious leaders in the days of the Maccabees determined to wait for the coming of a prophet to tell them what to do with the desecrated stones of the altar. This admission confirms there were no inter-testamental prophets and incidentally reveals that "writing prophets" were not involved in the production of the apocryphal books of that era.

## THE GIFT OF HEALING IN THE SCRIPTURAL RECORD

LEONARD W. PINE

### INTRODUCTION

Healing has been a universal human passion ever since the decay of sin entered the world. Disease, deformity, weakness are common to the human experience in every region and age. The Scriptures are not silent on the matter of healings of various sorts, using the common terms nearly 150 times in the Old and New Testaments, along with many other passages that speak of healing events in other terms. It is not surprising that such an activity captivates the imaginations of fallen men. Men have tried to practice it, imitate it, counterfeit it, and otherwise pursue it for their own gain or the betterment of others (for the more magnanimous among the sons of men!). The pursuit of healing and health has taken mankind along the medical path of the physician and surgeon as well as along the mystical path of the healer and shaman, with equally passionate adherents on both paths. Some even try to walk on both paths at the same time, lending whatever credibility either path possesses to the other. Healing has marketability galore, and fallen men have been eager to exploit that fact for millennia.

If that last statement sounds cynical, it should be borne in mind that God warned the people early on about false prophets who would deceive them by delivering divine-sounding messages or producing signs and wonders. He gave specific guidelines for determining how true prophets and servants of God were to be identified in Deut 13:1-5. Moses was

confronted by Egyptian sorcerers who imitated God's miracles to a degree in Exod 7-8. Simon the sorcerer tried to buy the Holy Spirit so that he could perform miracles as the apostles did, as recorded in Acts 8:9-24. In Rev 13 the Antichrist and the beast will perform wondrous miracles of healings, including resurrection, which will deceive the nations completely. All of these examples make it clear that wisdom dictates careful examination of "faith healing" in light of the Word of God. Allow it at the outset to be said that in writing this article the author makes no attempt to improve upon the classic works on this subject,<sup>1</sup> but hopes rather to complement those excellent treatments as best he can.

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#### THE RECORD OF SCRIPTURE

##### *Terms*

The Hebrew term רָפָא *rapha'* means to *heal*, or *make healthful*. Derivatives hold the idea of *remedy*, *healing*, or *health*. The TWOT entry reads in part:

This is a purely Hebrew root which appears over sixty times in the OT.... The meaning is straightforward in vir-

tuallly all passages. In the initial occurrence (Gen 20:17) in which God heals Abimelech, the Qal stem is employed. The root is also used of human healing, as a substantive, "physician" (Gen 50:2). *Rapha'* is also used of the healing and forgiveness of Gentile nations (Isa 19:22; 57:18). ... A human subject is generally the object of the healing (Exod 21:19), "He shall cause him to be thoroughly healed." ... The stem is also used for the restoration of objects (2 Kgs 2:22); the turning of salt water into fresh (Jer 19:11). The themes of healing and restoration as connotations of *rapha'* are combined in the usage of Isa 53:5, "With his stripes we are healed." In many of the occurrences, it is God who causes healing or afflicts with disease or catastrophes which cannot be healed but by divine intervention.<sup>2</sup>

The Greek term *qerapeuw therapeuo* is similarly straightforward. The Louw-Nida Lexicon's entry 23.139 notes that the word means "to cause someone to recover health, often with the implication of having taken care of such a person."<sup>3</sup> So, the ideas of *service* and *care* are part of the word's semantic range.

When considered together, the biblical terms used indicate a relatively simple concept of healing as restoration to wholeness by the direct or indirect (through human agents) intervention of God. The terms are used in both physical and spiritual contexts, as will be demonstrated below.

##### *Divine healing in the OT*

These texts describe the direct healing work of God himself and provide the foundation for consideration of biblical healing:

- Exod 15:26 – “If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I *am* the LORD who heals you.”<sup>4</sup>
- Num 12:13 – “So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, ‘Please heal her, O God, I pray!’” (concerning the rebellious Miriam, whom the LORD smote with leprosy, and then let her suffer in her illness for a week before healing her at Moses’ request)
- Deut 32:39 – “Now see that I, *even* I, *am* He, and *there is* no God besides Me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; nor *is there any* who can deliver from My hand.”
- 2 Kgs 20:5 – “Return and tell Hezekiah the leader of My people, ‘Thus says the LORD, the God of David your father: “I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; surely I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the LORD.”’”
- 2 Chr 7:14 – “If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”
- Ps 41:4 – “I said, ‘LORD, be merciful to me; Heal my soul, for I have sinned against You.’”
- Ps 103:3 – “Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases....”
- Isa 53:5 – “He *was* wounded for our transgressions, *He was* bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace *was* upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.”
- Isa 61:1 – “The Spirit of the Lord GOD *is* upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted.”
- Jer 33:6 – “Behold, I will bring it health and healing; I will heal them and reveal to them the abundance of peace and truth.” (context of new covenant restoration)
- Hos 6:1 – “Come, and let us return to the LORD; for He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up.” (Spiritual healing is a major theme in Hosea’s prophecy.)

From these passages it is clear the God is *the* Healer; that his healing is not limited to physical ailments but more significantly and frequently targets the ailments of the soul; and that his healing work is always done in the context of the obedient covenant community in response to their prayers.

#### *Healing ministry of OT saints*

The OT does not speak of specific gifting in the same way that the NT does (with the possible exception of the artisans of the tabernacle furnishings, Exod 35:30-36:1), but there are several examples of healings that take place in the physi-

cal realm by divine action through the agency of men, as well as healings in the sense of using available medical resources and knowledge to care for the infirm.

- Exod 21:19 – “If he rises again and walks about outside with his staff, then he who struck *him* shall be acquitted. He shall only pay *for* the loss of his time, and shall provide *for him* to be thoroughly healed.”
- Lev 13:18 – “If the body develops a boil in the skin, and it is healed, . . . .”
- Lev 14:48 – “But if the priest comes in and examines *it*, and indeed the plague has not spread in the house after the house was plastered, then the priest shall pronounce the house clean, because the plague is healed.”
- Num 21:9 – “So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.”
- 2 Kgs 5:11 – “Naaman became furious, and went away and said, ‘Indeed, I said to myself, “He will surely come out *to me*, and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place, and heal the leprosy.’”” (Elisha did not employ any theatrics, and apparently never laid eyes on Naaman.)
- 2 Chr 30:20 – “The LORD listened to Hezekiah and healed the people.”
- Eccl 3:3 – “A time to kill, and a time to heal; . . . .”
- 2 Kgs 4:17-37 – Though the term for healing is not present in this passage, Elisha’s raising of the Shunammite’s son from the dead certainly would qualify as a miracle of healing!

These passages demonstrate that those healings done by such men as Moses and Elisha were extraordinary, not common, parts of their ministry; that little or no human agency other than prayer was involved (Elisha’s raising of the Shunammite’s son excepted); that medical means were employed as the norm of healing; that it was not always God’s will that healing take place; and that God’s servants did not adjust their methods to accommodate the sensibilities of fallen men.

#### *Healing ministry of Christ*

There are, of course, many examples of Christ’s healing ministry, but a few will suffice for the present purposes.

- Matt 4:23 – “And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.” (Essentially the same wording occurs in 9:35.)
- Matt 13:15 – “The hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with *their* eyes and hear with *their* ears, lest they should understand with *their* hearts and turn, so that I should heal them.” (Quoting Isa 6:10.)
- Mark 5:29 – “Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and

she felt in *her* body that she was healed of the affliction.” (See also v. 34.)

- Luke 4:17-21 – (reading the Isaiah scroll in the synagogue of Nazareth)
- Luke 5:17 – “As He was teaching, ... there were Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting by, .... And the power of the Lord was *present* to heal them.” (They wouldn’t seek healing, but the man lowered on the bed through the roof experienced that power. See also Luke 6:19.)
- Luke 9:11 – “He received them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who had need of healing.”

Jesus forcefully declared that he did the works that he did so that people would know that he was the Messiah sent by the Father (John 14:11). In some places, he refused to do any miracles because of the belligerent unbelief of those about him (Matt 12:38; 13:58). These representative texts reveal that Jesus saw himself as the one who fulfilled Isaiah’s prophecy (61:1, above); that the goal of physical healing was to awaken a desire for spiritual healing; that the power was divine in origin; that it often came in response to prayer; that it often came at Jesus’ own initiative; that it was nearly always connected to the ministry of the Word; that it was not about glorifying the healer, but God; and that this power could be delegated to commissioned servants for particular purposes.

#### *Healing ministry of the apostles*

Passages giving examples of the gift include:

- Matt 10:1 – “When He had called His twelve disciples to *Him*, He gave them power *over* unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease.”

**Jesus, through the story of the rich man and Lazarus, posits clearly that the Word is supreme and sufficient. The gospel is complete even if spiritual gifts are not seen.**

- Acts 4:23-31 – This passage clearly lays out what the apostles and disciples at the time understood the purpose of the gifting for healing to be.
- Acts 5:16 – “Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed.”
- Acts 9:34 – “Peter said to him, ‘Aeneas, Jesus the Christ heals you. Arise and make your bed.’ Then he arose immediately.”
- Acts 14:9-10 – “*This* man heard Paul speaking. Paul, observing him intently and seeing that he had faith to be healed, said with a loud voice, ‘Stand up straight on your feet!’ And he leaped and walked.”

- Acts 28:8-9 – “It happened that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and dysentery. Paul went in to him and prayed, and he laid his hands on him and healed him. So when this was done, the rest of those on the island who had diseases also came and were healed.”

The Twelve are specifically given gifts for their tour of the cities of Judah in Matt 10:1. The Seventy of Luke 10 are not given gifts specifically, though demons were said to be subject to them in Jesus’ name (vs. 17-20). From these passages one may reasonably deduce that every example recorded is of one of the apostles employing the gift given to him by Christ. None of the healing events were revelatory, but were to confirm the divinely commissioned status of the apostles and identify them with the earthly ministry of Christ. The Acts 4 passage in particular emphasizes the governing relationship of the Word to works of healing and other wonders. Finally, in comparison to the ministry of the Word, healing and other gifts were relatively miniscule in importance and frequency, at least as they are recorded in Scripture.

#### *NT propositions regarding healing*

There are some significant New Testament passages where the specific “gift” or empowering to heal is mentioned. These passages are often considered to be “proof texts” for current faith healing practices.

- Matt 10:8 – “Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons.”

Matt 10:8 is clearly spoken to the twelve disciples who would become the apostles. Even Judas experienced this commissioning, but Judas forfeited that office and was

replaced by Matthias. The Apostle Paul, by direct appointment of the Savior, would become an apostle at a later time.

The context dictates that this command be understood to be applicable to the situation at hand, and is not to be taken as a universal command for all ages of the Church. Jesus did not give this gift to any other disciples so far as is recorded, and modern Christians should be content with that.

- 1 Cor 12:9 – “...to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit...”
- 1 Cor 12:28 – “God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues.”
- 1 Cor 12:30 – “Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?”

Corinth was a congregation rife with division over the arrogant, selfish, and disorderly practice of gifts granted to the church. Through the ministry of the apostles, first generation Christians were very much a part of the establishment of the church universal. The canon of Scripture was not yet complete, and God in his providence magnified the work of the apostles through their converts to spread and establish the gospel testimony in the known world. The Spirit granted various gifts to the church during this time to empower its growth and testimony in the world. First in priority was revelatory work through the apostles, then preaching, then teaching, then miracles of divine origin, and only

then the various spiritual gifts (compare 1 Cor 12:31). Significantly, in a similar list in Eph 4, Paul does not mention spiritual gifts at all, only the offices of various ministers in the Church.

- Jas 5:14-16 – “Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Confess *your* trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”

This passage from James’ epistle is among the most frequently cited as proof that a healing ministry is to continue as a normative practice of the Church today. Actually, it is normative, but not in the way the faith healer perspective would like it to be. The anointing with oil that is mentioned is of the sort that refers to the application of oil medicinally.<sup>5</sup> That we should pray for one another when sick is normative, and we should indeed take our medicine. The leadership of the church especially should unite before the Lord to seek the intervention of the Spirit of God in the life of the sick. God does answer prayer and heal directly when he so desires. We should also pray for spiritual healing during a time of physical frailty, in keeping with the emphasis upon spiritual healing that we have seen throughout the Scriptures. One of the effects of division among the Corinthian church, for example, was that many were sick and some died. So confessing wrongs done to one another and restoring relation-

ships is a good way to invoke the blessing of God upon needed physical restoration.

#### HOW ARE WE TO UNDERSTAND HEALING IN THE POST-APOSTOLIC AGE?

Luke 16:31 is a very important passage for this discussion. It reads, “If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.” Jesus, through the story of the rich man and Lazarus, posits clearly that the Word is supreme and sufficient. The gospel is complete even if spiritual gifts are not seen.

The biblical terms referring to healing convey the idea of restoration to health or wholeness through care. The terms are used of the direct acts of God in physical and spiritual contexts, and of the efforts of men acting on God’s commission or simply on their own initiative in the care of others. Healing is an indication of the blessing of God upon his people. Prayer and humility are key factors as God responds to the cries of God’s people in times of their physical or spiritual distress. The gift of healing, along with other spiritual gifting, is particularly stated to have been given to the disciples/apostles, and to others in the first century church under their authority. Christ’s healing ministry was for the specific purpose of validating his claims that he was sent from the Father. The NT gift was given to confirm the sent status of the apostles and the continuity of Christianity with the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Healing and other spiritual gifts are relatively unimportant even in the first century church, though many abused and elevated them to abnormal prominence in the life of the church. Finally, God continues to heal in response to the prayers

of his people, either directly by his sovereign and immediate power or through the agency of medicinal means.

**The leadership of the church especially should unite before the Lord to seek the intervention of the Spirit of God in the life of the sick. God does answer prayer and heal directly when he so desires.**

There is no Scriptural record that the spiritual gifts, including healing, are still ordinarily being dispensed today. In light of such passages as Luke 16:31, Deut 12:32, and Rev 22:18-19 (“For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book”), contemporary Christians can understand that the role of the spiritual gifts has been completed with the apostles, and that the Word of God validates itself through the activity of the Holy Spirit in the life of the reader/hearer (Heb 4:12).

God continues to act as God directly, with his completed revelation as our means of evaluating those acts properly.

We need no further substantiation for God’s reality and work. 📖

<sup>1</sup> For instance, it would be hard to improve upon B. B. Warfield’s *Counterfeit Miracles* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1972). John McArthur’s work, *The Charismatics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), also has an excellent section on the subject of healing (pp. 130-155).

<sup>2</sup> R. Laird Harris, et al., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, vol. II, entry #2196. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), p. 857.

<sup>3</sup> “Bibleworks” software database.

<sup>4</sup> All Scripture citations are taken from the New King James Version of the Bible.

<sup>5</sup> The Greek term is simply that which refers to olive oil, ἔλαιον *elaion*, used in the same way as found in Luke 10:34, where the Good Samaritan uses the oil and wine to treat the wounds of the injured traveler. The same phrase is used in such passages as Mark 6:13, in the context of the healing ministry of the disciples as they went about doing the work of the kingdom.

## SPEAKING IN TONGUES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

JOHN A. BATTLE

Speaking in tongues is a person's speaking aloud in a language unknown to him or her, usually as a part of religious prayer or worship. It is clear that the gift of tongues was given by God in the times of the NT. Many Christians today believe that we still should seek this supernatural gift in order to grow in Christian faith and love, and to praise God. Charismatic Christians believe this and other supernatural spiritual gifts are still operative in the church; cessationist Christians believe that these gifts ceased during NT times and are not presently exercised in the church. A careful study of the gift of tongues in the NT will support the cessationist position.

### OCCURRENCES OF TONGUES IN THE NT

There are only five occasions in which the NT reports that Christians spoke in tongues. All of these occurrences took place early in the history of the NT church.

1. The disciples on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:4, 11)
2. The new believers in Samaria (Acts 8:14-17); while tongues are not mentioned in particular, that seems to be indicated because the text implies that the Holy Spirit "fell upon" them<sup>1</sup> and states that they "received the Holy Spirit" in a visible fashion, and similar accounts in Acts mention the gift of tongues
3. The household of the Roman centurion Cornelius (Acts 10:44-46); this tongue-speaking was the same gift

the disciples had received on Pentecost (v. 47)

4. The believers in Ephesus when Paul arrived and taught them about Jesus (Acts 19:6)
5. The believers in Corinth after Paul had founded the church there (1 Cor 12-14)

The gift of tongues appeared in the early years of the church, along with the supernatural gifts of prophecy, casting out demons, and healing. All of these occurrences took place before or during Paul's missionary journeys and first trip to Rome. There is no NT example of speaking in tongues (or, for that matter, of prophecy or of casting out demons or of supernatural healing) from the time of Paul's first Roman imprisonment or beyond.

### NT TONGUES WERE HUMAN LANGUAGES

It is generally agreed that the tongues spoken by the disciples on the day of Pentecost were actually human languages of the world, but languages unknown by the speakers. This fact is apparent from the context of Acts 2, where people from various nations heard the disciples speak in their own "native language" (v. 8). Apparently, many disciples were speaking at the same time, and most people thought they were babbling, since they did not know the languages of most of the speakers; this fits with the accusation that the disciples were drunk (v. 13), and yet with the fact that foreigners from various countries could understand that their own language was being spoken by at least some of the speakers.

When the Gentile convert Cornelius and his household were "speaking in tongues and praising God," Peter said

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that the Lord gave them the same gift that the disciples had at Pentecost, when foreign languages were spoken (Acts 10:47). Peter repeated this fact to his friends in Jerusalem: “As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning” (Acts 11:15). We can thus conclude that Cornelius and his family spoke in human languages unknown by them, just as happened during Pentecost.

It is probable that the saints in Samaria, likewise, spoke in foreign languages, as that gift is called “receiving the Holy Spirit,” identifying it with the speaking in foreign languages by the disciples on the day of Pentecost and presumably later by Cornelius and his family.<sup>2</sup>

Since the tongue-speaking that took place in the churches in Ephesus and in Corinth date from Paul’s third missionary journey, several years after the earlier occurrences mentioned in Acts, some have suggested that this gift was different in that it was not human languages, but “heavenly” languages. Some find support for this idea by several statements in 1 Corinthians. Paul speaks of “the tongues of men and of angels,”<sup>3</sup> thus apparently allowing for “angelic” languages as a possible experience for tongue speakers. The gift may require another spiritual gift to interpret the message,<sup>4</sup> perhaps indicating that it was not given in a human language. It is described as speaking “not to men but to God,” and “uttering mysteries.”<sup>5</sup>

Before answering these specific arguments for “angelic languages,” it should be noted that, on the face of it, the tongues spoken in Ephesus and Corinth appear to be human languages, just as

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they were in the book of Acts. First, the same terminology is used for the occurrences in Corinth as for those in Acts.<sup>6</sup> Second, when Paul discusses tongue speaking in Corinth, he describes it in terms of human languages. He quotes from the OT.<sup>7</sup> Isaiah the prophet declared that God would speak “with other tongues” to Israel, by “the lips of foreigners.” This was to be not a blessing, but a sign of a curse against the sinful Israelites. Because they rejected the words of the prophets, which they could understand, God would speak to them in a foreign language they would not understand. This was done when the Assyrians invaded the land, taking captive the northern kingdom of Israel and much of the nation of Judah. Invading soldiers spoke the human language of Aramaic, not the Hebrew spoken by the Jews of Isaiah’s day.<sup>8</sup> This is the reason Paul declares the hearing of an unknown tongue (without its translation) to be a

sign of judgment, a “sign for unbelievers.”<sup>9</sup>

The particular arguments for so-called “angelic” languages can be answered easily. First, the statement of Paul about speaking “with the tongues of men and angels” does not imply that he or anyone else actually spoke “in the tongues of angels.” In 1 Cor 13:1-3 Paul makes a series of “if” statements, each of them being actually unrealistic:

- “If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels”
- “If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge”
- “If I have a faith that can move mountains”
- “If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames”

Note that Paul did none of these things. He did all these things to a certain extent, but not to the extreme mentioned at the end of each clause. He did speak in the “tongues of men”; he did possess “the gift of prophecy” and had some “knowledge” of “mysteries”; he did “have faith”; he did “give to the poor” and he did suffer in “his body” for Christ. But Paul never “fathomed all mysteries and all knowledge,” nor “moved mountains,” nor “gave all his possessions to the poor,” nor “surrendered his body to the flames.” These are all examples of hyperbole—making a point by exaggeration.<sup>10</sup> He did none of these things to the extent spoken of. In the same way this passage would lead us to believe that, while he “spoke in the tongues of men,” he never “spoke in the tongues of angels.” “Speaking in the

tongues of angels” would be the hyperbole, the extreme extent of tongue speaking—like the other examples, an extreme he never actually reached. To apply this concept to the Corinthians, Paul uses the argument from the greater to the lesser. He recognizes that they speak with the tongues of men, but even if they spoke in the tongues of angels, they still would profit nothing without love. If that is the case, they even more certainly profit nothing without love, speaking only the tongues of men.

**Paul did none of these things to the extent spoken of. In the same way this passage would lead us to believe that, while he “spoke in the tongues of men,” he never “spoke in the tongues of angels.”**

The other arguments for “angelic languages” are easier to answer. The fact that there was a need for a “gift of interpretation” to translate the message into the familiar language does not mean that the message was given in an “angelic” language. It may simply mean that no one present knew the specific foreign language used by the tongue speaker. That appears to be the case in Acts 2, where only the native speakers understood each of the languages spoken by the disciples that day; to the rest they appeared to be babbling, to be “drunk.”<sup>11</sup> And when Paul writes that the tongue speakers were

speaking “not to men but to God,” and “uttering mysteries,”<sup>12</sup> he means that God understood them, but the people did not understand. The “mysteries” spoken were things previously unknown, but now revealed by the Spirit of God. When the interpretation was given, people understood the message; and the message itself was something revealed by God. In that sense, tongue speaking was a subset of prophecy. In fact, Peter referred to tongue speaking as “prophecy” when he quoted the OT to identify what was happening on the day of Pentecost.<sup>13</sup>

#### CESSATION OF SUPERNATURAL SPIRITUAL GIFTS IN THE NT

While supernatural spiritual gifts are fairly common in the earlier parts of the NT,<sup>14</sup> there is not a single reference to any of them in writings from later times of the NT—Paul’s Prison Epistles (Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, Philippians), Paul’s Pastoral Epistles (1 Timothy, Titus, 2 Timothy), the Epistles of Peter and of John, or the book of Hebrews. The few times miracles are mentioned in the book of Revelation are either speaking of past miracles or of future miracles that are associated with the events of last days; they are not attributed to the church of the time John was writing<sup>15</sup> (the gift of tongues is not mentioned at all in Revelation).

When writing to the churches in Ephesus, Colossae, and Philippi, Paul was a prisoner in Rome. Unlike the earlier days, the Lord did not miraculously deliver him from prison. Rather, Paul exercised his Christian and apostolic office in that situation. He even mentioned that he was anxious about the health of Epaphroditus, whom the Philippians had sent to him, because he had been so ill he almost died;

while he undoubtedly prayed for him, he was not able simply to heal him miraculously.<sup>16</sup> He told the people in the churches that they needed to live consistent Christian lives, and to be faithful in their various vocations. Nowhere did he encourage them to prophesy, speak in tongues, or perform other miraculous works.

To confirm the cessation of these supernatural gifts in the NT church, one need only consult the Pastoral Epistles of Paul. During this later period of his life Paul was unable to heal Trophimus, and had to leave him behind in the city of Miletus.<sup>17</sup> In these three letters Paul taught, admonished, and encouraged Timothy and Titus as they led the churches in Ephesus and in Crete. Paul wrote ninety imperative verbs in these books; they cover all important aspects of the minister’s life and ministry in the church.<sup>18</sup> Never once in all these instructions does he say the minister should exercise these gifts, or should encourage his people to do so. He makes no provision for them. On the other hand, repeatedly he tells them to teach the Scriptures, cultivate Christian virtues, warn against immorality and heresy, and lead the people as an example and a teacher.

Reading carefully the epistles of Peter and of John, as well as the book of Hebrews, we look in vain for any miraculous works going on.<sup>19</sup> The writers themselves are subject to the normal human frailties and limitations. They do not expect or encourage those to whom they are writing to exercise supernatural gifts. The Christians who received those letters were never expected to possess supernatural spiritual gifts, and they received no instructions about them. In the

many exhortations to the believers these books address, there is no mention of seeking supernatural gifts such as healing, prophecy, or tongues. Again, as with Paul, the Christians are to use their ordinary powers in the service of Christ, strengthened and enabled by the Holy Spirit.

Since all the supernatural spiritual gifts ceased in the apostolic period, it is apparent that supernatural speaking in tongues and interpretation of tongues were included in that category and were among those gifts no longer exercised.

#### PURPOSE OF TONGUES IN THE NT

God had important reasons for giving supernatural spiritual gifts to the Christians in NT times. These gifts included miracles, healings, raising the dead, casting out demons, and prophecy, as well as speaking in tongues. Not all these signs needed be present in any one person. The NT specifies two reasons for these gifts, both of which are limited to the times of the initiation of the new dispensation under the apostles.

The first purpose of these gifts was to certify or accredit Jesus, the apostles, and the early evangelists as spokesmen for God. Jesus said that the miracles he did bore witness to who he was.<sup>20</sup> Since God gave these miraculous signs to him, the people should receive his teaching as being from God.

The apostles likewise were given these supernatural gifts in order to prove their authority to speak for God. Paul reinforced his authority among the Corinthian Christians by reminding them that, “truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and

mighty deeds.”<sup>21</sup> The book of Hebrews, apparently written by a disciple of Paul, refers to this important purpose of miraculous gifts:

“How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will?”<sup>22</sup>

Note that “gifts of the Holy Spirit” are included in this list of signs. The author does not claim these signs for himself or for those to whom he is writing; rather, he attributes them to “those who heard” the Lord—that is, the early apostles and evangelists.

Not only did Jesus and the apostles exercise these gifts to show their authority from God, but other early church leaders, often called evangelists, had the same authenticating gifts given to them. The NT mentions two men in particular in this regard. Stephen, the early deacon and first Christian martyr, is described as a man “full of faith and power,” who “did great wonders and signs among the people.” Because of these supernatural signs “they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke.”<sup>23</sup> Likewise, Philip the deacon and evangelist exercised these gifts, gifts used to bring the Samaritans to faith: “And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.”<sup>24</sup>

Not only did the supernatural spiritual gifts authenticate God’s spokesmen, but prophesying and speaking in tongues in particular had a second important pur-

**The purposes of these gifts had been met, and the gifts were no longer necessary. It was now God's purpose that the church should grow in knowledge and faith using the ordinary means used by the Holy Spirit: the Scriptures, the sacraments, and prayer.**

pose. The giving of these signs to the first Christians—Jews, Samaritans, God-fearing Gentiles, and formerly pagan Gentiles—proved that these groups were now a part of the church of Jesus Christ, the new Israel of God. Peter said that the Pentecostal gift of tongues was spoken of by Joel the prophet: “in the last days, says God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy . . .”<sup>25</sup> While Joel did not mention tongues explicitly, Peter included the tongue-speaking as a type of prophecy. Joel's prophecy views the coming of the glorious kingdom of God. Peter understood these signs as the evidence that the kingdom promises were now given to those with these signs, and were now offered to the Jews in Jerusalem—

Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God

has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.<sup>26</sup>

The promised kingdom was offered first to the Jews. While many thousands believed, the majority of the nation, together with its leaders, rejected the gospel and persecuted the apostles. Jesus had predicted this rejection, and the consequent destruction of Jerusalem in the near future.<sup>27</sup>

As the Lord had instructed the disciples, the gospel was to go forth not only in Jerusalem, but into Judea, Samaria, and the Gentile nations.<sup>28</sup> This was accomplished historically because the Jews as a nation rejected the message of Jesus, forcing the early believers to scatter, taking the gospel with them.<sup>29</sup> At each new stage in the expansion of the gospel there is mention of the new believers' speaking in tongues. Note the following cultural groups from which these believers came:

<u>Reference</u>	<u>Cultural Group(s)</u>
Acts 2	Palestinian & Foreign Jews
Acts 8	Samaritans
Acts 10-11	God-fearing Gentiles
Acts 19	Jews & Pagan Gentiles in Asia Minor
1 Cor 12-14	Jews & Pagan Gentiles in Greece

By granting the gift of prophecy and tongues to converts from these groups, God was demonstrating to them and to the church as a whole that they were included in the promised kingdom—that they were heirs with Abraham, Isaac, and

Jacob to the promises made to Israel, that the church was one in Jesus Christ. The church was truly universal. This second purpose of the miraculous signs, especially tongue-speaking, was asserted long ago by Augustine:

In the earliest times, “the Holy Ghost fell upon them that believed: and they spoke with tongues,” which they had not learned, “as the Spirit gave them utterance.” These were signs adapted to the time. For there behooved to be that betokening of the Holy Spirit in all tongues, to show that the Gospel of God was to run through all tongues over the whole earth. That thing was done for a betokening, and it passed away.<sup>30</sup>

Both purposes—to accredit God’s spokesmen and to unify all cultural groups in the church—were fulfilled by the end of Paul’s ministry. The church was soon to have the completed canon of Scripture, and the Jewish and Gentiles believers recognized each other as fellow members of Christ’s body. Therefore, the purposes of these gifts had been met and the gifts were no longer necessary. It was now God’s purpose that the church should grow in knowledge and faith using the ordinary means used by the Holy Spirit: the Scriptures, the sacraments, and prayer.

#### CONCLUSION

The gift of tongues was a kind of the more general gift of prophecy. Instead of giving the message from God in the common language of that place, specially gifted individuals gave that message in another human language, unknown to them. It was the duty of others to translate that message so that all could understand. The translator either knew the lan-

guage, or had a comparable spiritual gift to translate it. All indications in the NT point to the language of the tongue to be a human language.

The first purpose of divinely given supernatural gifts in general was to validate the message of the new covenant and accredit the spokesman. A second purpose of these signs, and of prophecy and tongue-speaking in particular, was to demonstrate that each new cultural group was accepted by God into the church, the one body of Christ, and had a right to the privileges and an interest in the promises of the new covenant. No longer were these promises reserved exclusively for Jews and proselytes to Judaism.

The purposes of the supernatural gifts have been fulfilled. While no one can limit what God can do, or will do in the future when Christ returns, it is apparent that, from the time of the beginning and initial growth of the Christian church until now, God has chosen to use the ordinary means of grace to call out and sanctify his church. We should not be seeking these supernatural gifts, but rather should be content with the marvelous spiritual blessings now available to us in Christ. 📖

<sup>1</sup> Literally, “He *had fallen* upon none of them” (ἦν ἐπιπέπτωκος *en epipeptokos*, “had fallen upon,” a periphrastic pluperfect construction). We can infer that the Holy Spirit did “fall upon” them when Peter and John placed their hands on them (v. 17).

<sup>2</sup> Acts 8:15-17.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor 13:1.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor 12:10.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Cor 14:2.

<sup>6</sup> For example, Acts 2:4 (ἐτέραις

γλώσσαις *heterais glossais*, “with other tongues”) and 1 Cor 14:21 (ἑτερογλώσσοις *heteroglossois*, “with other tongues”) use nearly the exactly same Greek wording—speaking in “other tongues.”

<sup>7</sup> 1 Cor 14:21 quotes Isa 28:11-12; cf. Deut 28:49.

<sup>8</sup> Note the languages spoken in Isa 36:11. Aramaic was spoken also by the Babylonians who later conquered the rest of Judah (cf. Jer 5:15).

<sup>9</sup> 1 Cor 14:22.

<sup>10</sup> For many biblical examples of this figure of speech, see E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible* (1898; reprinted: Grand Rapids, Baker Book House, 1981), 423-428. Bullinger includes this particular passage under the subcategory of *hypotheses*, things “which are impossible in themselves, but are used to express the greatness of the subject spoken of” (p. 427).

<sup>11</sup> Acts 2:13, 15.

<sup>12</sup> 1 Cor 14:2.

<sup>13</sup> Acts 2:18 quotes Joel 2:28; both the Greek of Acts and the Hebrew of Joel use the verb “to prophesy.” Thus for Peter, “to speak in tongues” equals “to prophesy”; only the language is different.

<sup>14</sup> NT books either written before Paul’s Roman imprisonment or dealing with events during that earlier time of NT history are the following: the Gospels, Acts, James, Jude, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Galatians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Romans. All NT accounts of supernatural spiritual gifts being exercised at that time are limited to these books.

<sup>15</sup> Past miracles in Rev 18:20; future miracles in Rev 11:10.

<sup>16</sup> Phil 2:25-28.

<sup>17</sup> 2 Tim 4:20.

<sup>18</sup> These imperative verbs are discussed in John A. Battle, “Pastoral Imperatives: Paul’s Use of the Imperative Mood in His Letters to Timothy and Titus,” *WRS Journal* 12:2 (Aug 2005) 12-18.

<sup>19</sup> It is important that the term “miracle” or “miraculous” refers to events that are in some way contrary to the laws of nature, and that these are limited to the physical realm. When Christians pray for God to heal someone today, he often answers with remarkable providences that may appear “miraculous” in a general sense; but the gift of healing, as such, is not now exercised in the church. Likewise, God still regenerates and sanctifies human hearts—that is a supernatural spiritual work, not a physical work, and is not normally considered a “miracle” for purposes of this discussion.

<sup>20</sup> John 5:36; Peter made the same conclusion about Jesus from his miracles (Acts 2:22).

<sup>21</sup> 2 Cor 12:12.

<sup>22</sup> Heb 2:3-4.

<sup>23</sup> Acts 6:8, 10.

<sup>24</sup> Acts 8:6.

<sup>25</sup> Acts 2:17, quoting Joel 2:28.

<sup>26</sup> Acts 3:19-21.

<sup>27</sup> E.g., Luke 21:24.

<sup>28</sup> Acts 1:8.

<sup>29</sup> Acts 8:3-4; the theological significance of this movement is asserted by Paul in Rom 11:11-12, 17.

<sup>30</sup> *Homilies on the Epistles of St. John*, 6:10 (NPNF, 1<sup>st</sup> Series 7:497-498).

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# BOOKS

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*Miracles Yesterday and Today* (subtitled *Real and Counterfeit*), by Benjamin B. Warfield (1918; Reprinted; Unicoi, Tennessee: The Trinity Foundation, 2007). Reviewed by William R. Kane.

Originally published in 1918 under the title *Counterfeit Miracles*, the book is based on six lectures delivered in October, 1917 at Columbia Theological Seminary. It has been republished by the Trinity Foundation. One might question, why? Is it possible that lectures delivered ninety years ago are still relevant to the issues of today? And if so, what makes them relevant at the current time? We note the continued claim in the church of the miracles of healing, of tongues, and of prophecy. In light of these circumstances, the answer to the first question as to its relevance is a resounding yes. The answer to the second question of what makes it relevant is the subject of this review.

Lecture one is the foundation for the series of lectures. In this lecture, Warfield sets forth the characteristics of the apostolic church, the purpose and nature of the miraculous gifts together with their cessation following the accomplishment of their purpose. He finds that the purpose of the gifts was to authenticate the apostles and the revelation that comes from God through them. The cessation of the gifts comes at the end of the apostolic period (particularly with the death of the last disciple upon whom the gifts were conferred by an apostle. In addition, this lecture analyzes other cessation theories which acknowledge both the reality of the gifts and their

cessation. The other views find the purpose to relate to the church, to protect, nurture, and extend the church in its infancy. According to this view the cessation of the gifts comes much later—in the fourth century at the time of Constantine or perhaps even later. Even though plausible in and of itself, it is shown by Warfield not to be compatible with either the scriptural or empirical data.

Lectures two through five consider the views and evidence with respect to continued ecclesiastical miracles as a permanent endowment of the church. Lecture two considers the patristic and medieval marvels mentioned in the testimony of the church fathers from the fourth century until the Reformation. Lecture three considers Roman Catholic miracles and includes material from the fourth century through the nineteenth century. Both of these lectures give us an understanding historically of the place of miracles in the life of the church.

The heathen world was full of wonder-tales. The church grew by bringing in the heathen, but they brought their superstitions with them. As the world was, so was the church. The single application of this principle by Warfield is with respect to miracles, but we are left with two questions. What else has the world brought into the church? And what is the world currently bringing into the church? Lecture four deals with the Irvingite gifts of the nineteenth century in Scotland and England. Its value is partly historical with the players and the roles they played as they exercised 'gifts' of healing, tongues, and prophecy. The

Irvingite supposed gifts of prophecy were discredited by the confessions of Robert Baxter and Mary Campbell. The chief value of Warfield's discussion, however, is the understanding it gives of how these 'gifts' were developed; namely, a misconception of Scripture mixed with misplaced enthusiasm and an expectation of these 'gifts.' Lecture five deals with faith healing and is second only to lecture one in importance. Warfield analyzes the views of A. J. Gordon in his *The Ministry of Healing, or Miracles of Cure in All Ages*. The faith-healing community of today follows Gordon in its misconceptions of Scripture and its lack of judgment with respect to the empirical evidence. The principles set forth by Warfield in his analysis of Gordon are still valid for evaluating current faith-healing movements.

Lecture six deals with mind-cure and principally the Christian Science teaching of Mary Baker Eddy. It is set apart from lectures two through five because it is not based on a continued manifestation of ecclesiastical miracles but rather on the pantheistic views of Eddy. It finds a common thread with lectures two through five in that the healings performed by its practitioners have the same characteristics as ecclesiastical healings since the apostolic church age. So then, the pagan healings, the church healings, the Christian science healings, and healings by mesmerism are not denied by Warfield as 'healings in fact,' but all have an element of means so that they are not miracles per se.

Warfield examines relevant Scripture passages which are frequently used by the faith-healing community as the basis of permanent ecclesiastical miracles. None of the passages (Mark 16:17-18; Jas

5:14-15; John 14:12; or Matt 8:17) justify that conclusion. The discussion of Matt 8:17 relates to the question of healing in the atonement as distorted by the faith-healers. Warfield acknowledges that redemption is for the body as well as for the soul; that provision is made in the atonement for the relief of man from disease and suffering. The error of the faith healers is in confusing redemption, which is objective and takes place outside of us, with the subjective effects of redemption, which take place in us and are wrought gradually. Warfield states, "Even after we have believed in Christ, and have a title as justified men to the benefits bought for us by His blood and righteousness, entrance into the actual enjoyment of these several benefits remains a process, and a long process, to be completed in a definite order."

In examining and analyzing the empirical evidence, Warfield emphasizes throughout the means God uses to perform his acts, the proper understanding of them, and their relation to the immediate acts of God. A right (biblical) view of means will enable one to distinguish between the remarkable and wonderful on the one hand and the truly miraculous on the other hand. Merely being inexplicable does not necessitate an event being miraculous. It is only the immediate works of God which deserve the name of miracles. Those things which are wrought in some part by means may be answers to prayer, wonderful and marvelous indeed, but are the result of the special providence of God. The use of means does not exclude God, but honors him who has not only appointed means but is also over all of the affairs of man. Some would look to means and disregard God; others will

depend on God, and disregard all means. The biblical view is to trust God, and use all the means which he has appointed. There is a whole class of healings which have been recorded where inspection indicates the use of some means. Furthermore, healings of this type appear to be common to pre-Christian pagan cultures, the patristic and medieval church, the Roman Catholic Church, the Irvingite movement, the faith-healers, and Christian Science practitioners.

In conclusion, remember that the purpose of miracles in the apostolic age was to authenticate the apostles, that miracles are inseparable from revelation, and that miracles are different from wonderful works which use means. Test the competency of the witnesses. Scrutinize the details of the testimony. Remember that nothing, no matter how inexplicable, can be a divine act, if there is anything contrary to the nature of God or his revelation. They must conform in all their implications to what God has revealed of himself. 📖

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## ***NOTES***

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