Spiritual Gifts

I CORINTHIANS 13:8

I. THE GIVER OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS
   1. Distributed to members of our Lord's family in the age of grace.
   2. Recognition of the victory of the Lord and as recognition for every born-again child of God.
   3. A gift to Church-Age Royalty as an expression of God's organized witness and testimony of His grace and salvation.

II. THE METHOD OF DISTRIBUTION OF GIFTS
   1. Initial Distribution: At the beginning of the Church Age spiritual gifts were provided by Jesus Christ immediately (Eph. 4:8-11).
   2. Later Distribution: Later during the Church Age gifts were and are handled by the sovereign decision of the Holy Spirit who gives to each Christian at least one spiritual gift. "Separately" means individually or severally. God deals with people as individuals.
   3. Gifts are given on the basis of the character of a loving, organized Trinity.

III. THE FUNCTION OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS
   1. At any time in the Church Age each spiritual gift is necessary in every location for the function of the Body of Christ in that area (I Cor. 12:27-31)
   2. The individual believer's gift functions properly or not depending upon that believer's state of spirituality and maturity (Acts 2:4; I Cor. 13:1-13).
   3. Possession of any particular spiritual gift does not confer either superiority or inferiority upon any individual believer or group of believers (I Cor. 12:7-11)

IV. GOD'S PLAN FOR SPIRITUAL GIFTS
   1. His plan included temporary gifts: The pre-canon period or the time before the scriptures were completed required the function of several temporary spiritual gifts (I Cor. 13:8-10; II Tim. 4:20). These included such gifts as: apostleship, miracles, healing, tongues, and interpretation of tongues. Temporary gifts existed during the period from 30 AD until approximately 117 AD. The canon of scripture was completed in 96 AD when the Apostle John penned Revelation.

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Tradition holds that John lived for an additional 20 years after the close of the canon, so it is likely that his apostleship continued until his death.

2. His plan included permanent gifts: Evangelism (Eph. 4:11); Pastor-Teacher (Eph. 4:11-13; Heb. 13:7, 17); Administration (I Cor. 12:5); Helper (I Cor. 12:28); Giving and Showing Mercy (Titus 2:3, 4; Titus 3:4).

V. THE ABUSE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

1. Apostasy seeks to keep temporary gifts alive.
2. Anyone seeking to practice temporary spiritual gifts is anti-scriptural (I Cor. 14:8, 33, 37-38).

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