**Lesson 21**

**The Spirit Endowing**

In this chapter on the spiritual gifts the Holy Spirit endows believers with, Arthur Pink focuses his attention exclusively on those gifts which he terms **extraordinary**, as compared to the Spirit’s **“ordinary”** gifts.

Note, as we go through this lesson, that there is no discussion of the **“ordinary” service gifts** we find in Romans 12:6-8, 1 Corinthians 12:28. Pink’s emphasis in this chapter is on understanding the Holy Spirit’s purpose for giving **extraordinary gifts.**

Due to the vehemence of his argument in this chapter it can be assumed that the charismatic movement was growing to the point that Pink was alarmed by the magnitude of its influence in the church.

Consider **1 Corinthians 12:8-10** . . .

***1 Corinthians 12:8-10— 8 For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, 10 and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues.***

From this passage Arthur Pink identifies **9 extraordinary gifts** of the Spirit:

* Prophecy
* Discernment
* Word of wisdom through the Spirit
* Word of knowledge according to the Spirit
* Faith
* Miraculous healing
* Miracles
* Speaking in tongues
* Interpretation of tongues

**What is the gift of Prophecy and what was its purpose?**

In the first generation of the church the gift of prophecy was for the purpose of preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. Remember, there were no New Testament writings until more than 30 years after the church was born. For those first 30+ years the message of the gospel was spread by word of mouth. It was through the word-of-mouth gift of prophecy that the Holy Spirit caused the gospel message to be taught throughout the world.

“The most signal gift of the Spirit for the benefit of His people in Old Testament times was that of *prophecy*. The Prophets were men who spoke in the name and by the authority of God, giving forth a divinely inspired message from Him. It is not surprising, then, that many pretended to possess this gift who were never inspired by the Holy Spirit, but rather were filled by a lying spirit, Satan making use of them, to accomplish his own designs (see 1Kings 22:6-7; Jeremiah 5:31, etc.). Those facts are recorded for our warning.

This same gift of prophecy occupied a prominent place in the early days of the Church age, before the New Testament was written.

* The gospel was at first declared from the immediate revelation of the Spirit, preached by His direct assistance, made effectual by His power, and accompanied in many instances by outward miraculous works—the whole of which is designated “the ministration of the Spirit” (2 Cor. 3:8).
* Those extraordinary manifestations of the Spirit were then so obvious and so acknowledged by all Christians, that those who wished to impose and deceive found no more successful method than by claiming to be themselves immediately inspired by the Spirit. Consequently we find such warnings given by God as . . .

***1 Thessalonians 5:20-21—*** ***do not despise prophetic utterances***. ***But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good***

***2 Peter 2:1— But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you***

***1 John 4:1— Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God***

**What is the gift of discernment and what was its purpose?**

The gift of discernment, translated ***the distinguishing of spirits*** in 1 Corinthians 12:10, was a gift of the Holy Spirit in which those who possessed it had an **extraordinary ability to discern and judge those who were truly teaching the truth** from those who were false teachers.

With Satan attempting to pervert and subvert the gospel message prior to the writing of the gospels and epistles, this was a crucial gift that the Spirit used to protect the church from false teaching.

“In order to preserve the church in truth and peace during those primitive times and safeguard them from being imposed upon by the false prophets, God graciously endowed some of His people with the gift of ***the distinguishing of spirits*** (1 Cor. 12:10). The saints were thereby provided with some who were enabled in extraordinary manner to judge and determine those who claimed to be specially endowed by the Spirit. But when the extraordinary manifestations of the Spirit ceased, this particular gift was also withdrawn, so the Christians are now left with the *Word alone* by which to measure and try all who claim to be the mouthpiece of God.

John Gill cites the example of Peter discerning the hearts of Ananias and Sapphira lying to the Holy Spirit.

***Acts 5:1-5— 1 But a certain man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, 2 and kept back some of the price for himself, with his wife's full knowledge, and bringing a portion of it, he laid it at the apostles' feet. 3 But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back some of the price of the land? 4 While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men, but to God." 5 And as he heard these words, Ananias fell down and breathed his last; and great fear came upon all who heard of it.***

* In this instance, Peter’s knowledge of the subterfuge of Ananias and Sapphira was only through ***discerning*** of these facts from the Holy Spirit.

**Question:** Arthur Pink identifies **discernment** as an extraordinary gift. But is it only an extraordinary gift, or do all Christians possess a degree of **discernment**?

**Reply:** While all Christians have the ability to discern truth from error, only those empowered by the Holy Spirit had the ability to **distinguish the true intents of the human heart**. The significant difference is in the use of the words **“discernment”** and **“distinguishing.”**

**What is the gift of “the word of wisdom through the Spirit” and what was its purpose?**

The **word of wisdom through the Spirit** was a special gift given the apostles in which they spoke with the wisdom that God provided them and not of their own.

* This was a gift given to directly refute the enemies of the gospel.
* Just as Balaam spoke blessings instead of cursings upon the Israelites, the apostles were the mouthpieces of God in refuting and answering the enemies of the gospel, thereby protecting and preserving God’s truth.

***The word of wisdom through the Spirit*** was a special gift bestowed upon the Apostles for the defense of the gospel against powerful adversaries, as we see in Luke 21:15 . . .

***Luke 21:15— for I will give you utterance and wisdom which none of your opponents will be able to resist or refute.***

**What is the gift of the word of knowledge according to the Spirit and what was its purpose?**

***The******word of knowledge according to the Spirit*** was a special gift bestowed on all who were called of God to preach the gospel. This gift supernaturally qualified them to expound divine mysteries without protracted study and lengthy experience, as we see in Act 4:13 . . .

***Acts 4:13— Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John, and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were marveling, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus.***

The purpose of ***the word of knowledge according to the Spirit*** was to hasten the spread of the gospel message without having to spend many months in study. God endowed these preachers supernaturally.

**What is the gift of faith and why was it important? Why is it an extraordinary gift?**

***To another faith*** (1 Cor. 12:9) was a special gift which enabled its possessor to trust God in any emergency, and to boldly face a martyr’s death, as we see in Acts 7:55-60 . . .

***Acts 7:55-60— 55 But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; 56 and he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." 57 But they cried out with a loud voice, and covered their ears and rushed at him with one impulse. 58 When they had driven him out of the city, they began stoning him; and the witnesses laid aside their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul. 59 They went on stoning Stephen as he called on the Lord and said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" 60 Then falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" Having said this, he fell asleep.***

**Question:** Was this gift of extraordinary faith possessed only in the early church?

**Reply:** Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs* contains the accounts of thousands of Christians who were empowered by the Spirit to go boldly and faithfully to their deaths, strong and firm in their faith. This supernatural gift remains with us today.

**What is the *gift of healing* and what was its purpose?**

The gift of **miraculous healing** was the ability to heal from natural afflictions, such as blindness, lameness, various sickness and even death. In Acts 20:8-12 we have the account of Paul raising Eutychus from the dead after he falls out of a window.

The purpose of this gift was to authenticate the messenger with working by the power of God.

* In Troas, Paul raised Eutychus from the dead (20:8-12).
* Peter healed the lame man at the Temple (3:7-11).
* Paul was not affected by the viper at Melita (28:3-6).
* He also healed those on the island who were diseased (28:8-9).
* Peter's shadow fell on the sick, healing them (Acts 5:15-16)
* Philip cast out demons and healed the lame (Acts 8:7, 13)
* At Lystra, Paul healed a crippled man (14:8-18).
* Paul healed a woman possessed by an evil spirit (16:18).

**What is the gift of *effecting of miracles* and what was its purpose?**

The gift of **miracles** was a supernatural gift to perform feats that no man can perform. This, as with others, was to validate the authenticity of the messenger and to edify and encourage the brethren that God was working in their midst.

* *Many* miracles were performed by the apostles (Acts 2:43).
* Signs and wonders continued to be done by the apostles (Acts 5:12).
* Peter healed many from various cities (Acts 5:12-16).
* Stephen wrought great wonders and signs (Acts 6:8).
* In Samaria, Philip did great miracles and signs (Acts 8:6,7,13).
* Paul blinded Elymus (Acts 13:11-12).
* Paul performed miracles in Iconium (Acts 14:3,4).

**What is *the gift of tongues* and what was its purpose?**

The ***gift of tongues*** was the ability to speak in a language that the speaker did not otherwise know. Just as God confused the languages of man in Babel, so the Holy Spirit gave the supernatural ability to speak in foreign tongues to validate God’s messengers and to edify those who heard the apostles speaking in their language.

**What is the *gift of interpretation of tongues* and what was its purpose?**

In the church in Corinth there was a major problem with the abuse of spiritual gifts. Apparently, there were some who could speak in **tongues**. But according to Paul’s instruction in 1 Cor. 14:26, if there was not a person who had the miraculous gift of **interpretation of tongues**, the ability to understand and translated the words of the one speaking in tongues, then the one speaking in tongues was to remain silent.

If another were present who could interpret, the two miraculous gifts might be exercised as one, and thereby the church would be edified and the faith of the hearers confirmed.

***1 Corinthians 14:26— What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.***

Pink cites the example of the church in Corinth which had an abundant infusion of the **9 extraordinary gifts** from the Spirit. What was the effect on the church in Corinth as a result of this?

* Instead of edifying the church body, the effect of having so many undisciplined men employing their gifts resulted in disorder and disunity.

“Now, in the first place, there is not a single statement in all the New Testament that the practice which obtained at Corinth prevailed generally in other churches of that day, still less that the assemblies of the saints in all generations.

* The fact is that not only were the conditions at Corinth merely *transitory and exceptional*, but they were *fraught with much evil*.
* “Gifts” were valued there more highly than grace, knowledge than love, and the consequence was that the possessors of those miraculous gifts, by their pride and forwardness, neutralized whatever good those gifts accomplished.

In the chapter Arthur Pink has a section entitled, **practice of gifts in the church meeting**. In it Pink points out that the church in Corinth practiced church services as “an open meeting.” In describing is, Arthur Pink expresses his vehement disagreement with its practice.

* An “open meeting” is a church service that has no designated leader or divinely authorized teacher.
* “The *absence of elders* made them like an army without officers, or a school without masters.
* Where all were equal, none would submit; where all wanted to teach, none would learn!”

As a result, Pink is highly critical of this form of church service because it becomes a “free for all.” Anyone who wants to say something is free to stand and speak, regardless of whether it is edifying or not. This is surely not the form of worship service that edifies man or glorifies God.

In examining this section on extraordinary spiritual gifts, Arthur Pink points to the main problem with the charismatic movement, as evidenced by Paul’s letter of rebuke to the Corinthians.

* The Corinthian church, and modern-day charismatic churches, believe that the Holy Spirit is the “President over assemblies.”
* As such, the charismatics believe that those who possess **extraordinary** gifts are used by the Holy Spirit to lead, teach and otherwise use their **extraordinary gifts** during the church service. Why does Pink reject and condemn such practice?

The reason Arthur Pink rejects this practice is because the idea that the Holy Spirit will speak directly to men during worship services, using men merely as a mouthpiece, is taught nowhere in Scripture.

* “Not only is there not a single statement elsewhere in the New Testament that the Holy Spirit is the *President over assemblies*, or that He is ever present in any other sense than that He dwells in individual believers, but 1 Corinthians 14 itself is very far from teaching that the Spirit presides over the local church, and requires those who have been “gifted” by Christ to wait on Him, and be governed entirely by His inward promptings.”

Just as there were **extraordinary gifts** of the Spirit, Pink also points out that “there were **offices** that were **extraordinary**, specifically the offices of Apostle and of Prophet. Do these **offices** presently exist?

* No, these offices have ceased. The office of apostle was an extraordinary gift instituted by the Holy Spirit for the purpose of preaching and spreading the gospel message, authenticated by his possession of **extraordinary gifts**.
* With the closing of the canon of Scripture the office of prophet is no longer present in the church. The role of the prophet was to give special revelation from God. But with the closing of the canon, God no longer communicates via special revelation.

What was the relationship between the **extraordinary offices** and the **extraordinary gifts**?

The **extraordinary gifts** were given for the time in the church when the **extraordinary officers** were present. With the departure of the officers the extraordinary gifts ceased.

**Question:** If the miraculous gifts of the Spirit are no longer present in the church, does this mean that the Holy Spirit is no longer performing miracles? How is the Holy Spirit operative in the saints today in regard to **gifts**?

**Reply:** It is true that the Spirit *acts today*, but it is *in secret*, and not in open manifestation as in the days of the Apostles; and *by mixed agency*. The truth is taught, but not perfectly as the Apostles and their delegates preached it. *What the Spirit does now is to bestow ordinary ministerial gifts, which the possessor must improve and develop by study and use.*