

## Parson to Person

### 1 Corinthians 12 – Part 1

#### (Cautious Continuationism in the Church Age)

*“Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant: You know that you were Gentiles, carried away to these dumb idols, however you were led. Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit. There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills” (1 Corinthians 12:1–11 NKJV).*

#### **Dispensational: Attributes of the Church Age**

There is an essential need to understand the attributes that make up a biblical dispensation in order to see why continuationism (the continuation of Holy Spirit-inspired gifts) must be embraced throughout the whole of the Church Age.

- 1) A dispensation *must* have some fundamental attributes in order to “qualify” as such. For example, the administration

(form and method of governance) assigned by God must remain intact for the duration of any said dispensation. Therefore, the method God sets in motion within the framework of a dispensational time period cannot suffer substantial change or we *must* recognize that the dispensation has passed and a new dispensation has begun. New details can be added or explained, but the general God-ordained rule must remain.

One helpful illustration would be the dispensational changes that occurred at the cross. The fact that animal sacrifices are no longer requested, required, or appropriate in the Church Age has caused some non-dispensational thinkers to willingly admit that the form of administration in the pre-cross era is *substantially* different from those today.

2) Every dispensation has a command, failure, and consequence. My illustrated model provides the consequence for each dispensational change as a “divine, worldwide, judgment.” Examples are noted by flames and identifying nomenclatures.

For example, in history we see four distinct divine worldwide judgments: the curse, the global flood, the confusion of tongues and segregation of the peoples in Babylon, and the cross. (Jesus suffered the divine judgment of God for “*the sins of the whole world*” 1 John 2:2.)

*Note: Inasmuch as there is a future divine worldwide judgment known as The Great White Throne segregating the dispensation known as the Kingdom Age or Millennial Reign of Christ from the*

*New Heaven and New Earth, the New Heaven and Earth does not qualify as a dispensation in the classical sense because there is a form of governance—but no failure—and therefore no consequence.*

## **Cessationism?**

With the above two points in mind, we can see that there has been no dispensational change since the Day of Pentecost. Therefore, the administration of the Holy Spirit has not changed. This dispensation then *must* include the work and gifts of the Holy Spirit.

None will argue that there has been ebb and flow regarding spiritual gifts (*charisma*) over the decades and centuries. The same must be observed with various demographics around the world. This ebb and/or flow is the sovereign selective work of God as described in 1 Corinthians 12:6. However, the gifts and work of the Spirit nonetheless continue.

## **Cautious Continuationism**

As the pastor at Candlelight, I do to some degree set a pace for the church. Therefore, I can say that we at Candlelight are extremely cautious continuationists—with good reason.

Some Charismatic/Pentecostal churches have so mishandled, abused, and misidentified spiritual gifts that Biblically-minded Christians have reacted to what I call “charismania.” With certainty then, extreme caution is needed regarding these matters. Moreover, it is wise! However, all biblically-minded, God-honoring

believers must also note that the “gifts of the Holy Spirit” are indeed gifts from God and should be received with joy.

Imagine a child rejecting a gift from his or her parent. Imagine a child receiving a gift and setting it on a shelf never to be used or appreciated. The same is true for the members of Christ’s body—the Church. We have been given gifts and must use them as God intends—for the edification of the believer and for the glory of God.

### **Another Jesus, Doctrines of Demons, and Dumb Idols and The Flesh**

Earlier in this letter Paul identified that the worship of idols is indeed the worship of demons (See 1 Corinthians 10:18–20). In 2 Corinthians Paul warned of “*another Jesus,*” and “*a different spirit.*” He knew that there were, are, and will be demons and demonic masquerading manifestations. Therefore, he called the Corinthian believers to cautious, biblically-based discernment. He wrote, “*I do not want you to be ignorant. You know that you were Gentiles, carried away to these dumb idols, however you were led. Therefore, I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit*” (vss. 1b–3). His warning was needed. There is a false Jesus and there is the true. There are demon spirits, and there is the one and only Holy Spirit (see 2 Corinthians 11–4). We need to know the difference.

Some of the manifestations attributed to the Holy Spirit are at best the flesh, and at the worst demons. However, caution and discernment should not lead to a carte blanche rejection of the

work of God's Holy Spirit. Moreover, we should not be afraid of what God is doing—nor should we operate in fear of the enemy.

## Don't Be Afraid

One of the ways the enemy works is through the stronghold of fear. Through fear the enemy robs believers of peace, joy, and blessing. He may work through fear to keep us from actively seeking the exercise of God's gifts (1 Corinthians 12:31 and 14:39). The gifts of the Holy Spirit are provisions God has given to the Church. We must not reject what He has given. His will is what is best for us! We can trust Him! Why would we want to reject the best He has for us and reject His work?

I love you all,  
Pastor Paul

