IMPARTATION OF GIFTS

In 1 Corinthians 12:8–10, Paul listed nine miraculous "manifestations" of the Spirit. These gifts were scattered among various members, with some apparently receiving no gift at all (vv. 28–30). Since possession of these gifts was not universal among the saints, by what means were they imparted? Consider:

- Jesus promised the **apostles** unique and wondrous powers by sending the Holy Spirit unto them upon His return to the Father (John 14:26; 15:26–27; 16:13). He identified this promise with their being baptized in the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4–5, 8). The **apostles** received this promised baptism (immersion) in Jerusalem on the first Pentecost after Jesus' ascension (Acts 2:1–4).
- The preaching of the **apostles** on Pentecost resulted in Gospel obedience of about 3,000 people (v. 41) and the establishment of the church Jesus had promised to build (v. 47; Mat. 16:18). Peter promised those believers who repented and were baptized in order to receive remission of their sins that they would receive "the gift of the Holy Spirit." Some assert that this promise refers to miraculous powers. However, chapters 2–5 of Acts belie this assertion. There is no hint that even one of the "wonders and signs" of which we read in these chapters was done by any others besides the **apostles** alone (2:43; 3:1–10; 4:7–11; 15–16; 5:12–16).
- Acts 6:1–6 tells of the appointment of seven men to serve the daily needs of certain ones. Upon these seven the **apostles** "laid their hands" (v. 6). The first record after Pentecost of miracles wrought by anyone other than an apostle occurs immediately in the text as Stephen did "great wonders and signs" (v. 8). The next occurrence of miraculous activity was by Philip, another one of the seven (8:6–7, 13). Two of the **apostles** (Peter and John) then joined Philip in his work. Several had been baptized, thus receiving the "gift of the Holy Spirit" promised on Pentecost (Acts 2:38; 8:12). However, only when **apostles** came and laid their hands on these converts did they "receive the Holy Spirit" enabling them to work miracles (vv. 14–19).
- Acts 19:1–7 tells of the **apostle** Paul's baptizing about a dozen men and thereafter laying hands on them, whereupon they were able to speak in other languages and prophesy.

The common element in each of these cases is that the impartation of the gifts to others came **through the apostles alone**. With the passing of the last **apostle** (i.e., John, cir. A.D 100), the means of impartation ceased—as therefore did the gifts themselves.

—Dub McClish

Denton, TX

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