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A1244 – October 28, 2012 – 1 Corinthians 12:7-11
Spiritual Gifts-Part 2

We are studying 1 Corinthians 12 and last week I submitted to you three categories that you might consider placing the gifts; you can take it or leave it but I think it's helpful in assisting you in finding your own gift because there is a lengthy list of gifts, somewhere around 20 gifts, so putting them in categories and defining these categories will give you an idea of where to look for your own gift. This week I've put together a chart with these three categories and which gifts I see in which category.

Three Categories of Gifts		
Foundational	Sign	Building
Apostle	Word of knowledge	Servant
Prophet	Distinguishings of Spirit	Teacher
	Word of wisdom	Pastor-teacher
	Tongues	Evangelist
	Interpretation of tongues	Exhortation
	Faith	Administration
	Healing	Giving
	Miracles	Leader
		Mercy
		Helps

First we saw the foundational gifts, these were given only in the 1st century for the foundational phase of the church; they are foundational gifts and since we are no longer in the foundational phase of the church these gifts are no longer being given. These gifts like apostle and prophet were great and

important gifts and necessary for the foundation of the church, but seeing that the church is no longer being founded they are no longer being given by the Spirit of God. Second, the sign gifts which were also given only in the 1st century for purpose of pointing people to someone or to something; for example the nearness of the kingdom or a person authenticated by God as His messenger. These gifts like healings and miracles were wonderful gifts and necessary to indicate the transition from Israel to the Church, but seeing that the transition has already taken place they are no longer being given by the Spirit of God. Third, the building gifts which are continually given for the building up of the church upon the foundation which has already been laid until the coming of Christ for His church. These gifts like teaching, mercy, giving, evangelism, administration and helps are fantastic gifts that are necessary to help the church grow, both in number and spiritual depth. So there are three categories you may consider and if you are a believer here with us today then you have one or more of the building gifts, you do not have a foundational gift or a sign gift, so there's a chart with a list to assist you in finding your gift. And if you think there's something wrong with the list then you can study the Scriptures like a Berean and see whether these things are not so.

Now the reason we are taking so much time going through the gift list in 1 Cor 12:8-10 is because there is so much confusion on some of these gifts today, particularly gifts like healing, miracles and tongues, the spectacular sign gifts. And people say if you say these gifts have ceased you are squelching the work of the Holy Spirit. So I want to review the NT context because otherwise you have no clue what you are talking about. Turn to Matt 22. This is very simple. There are two kingdom offers to the nation Israel. First, in the Gospels by Christ Himself attested by signs, miracles and wonders. That offer was rejected. Then a second offer in the Book of Acts by the apostles attested by signs, miracles and wonders. The second offer was also rejected and then judgment came on the nation Israel, AD70, Titus and the Roman armies came in and stomped the Jews.

See if you don't see these two offers and two rejects and the following judgment in this parable of our Lord. All I'm suggesting is that the miraculous sign gifts like miracles, healing and tongues were all done away by AD70 because they related to the kingdom program of Israel and when the kingdom offer was withdrawn, the signs, miracles and wonders were

withdrawn. Look at Matt 22:1 first. Verse 1, “And Jesus answered and spoke to them again in parables, saying, 2The kingdom of heaven” that’s the OT Kingdom, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son. 3And he sent out his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding feast, and they were unwilling to come.” Alright, that’s the first offer that Jesus Himself gave in the Gospels and it was clearly rejected. Verse 4, “Again,” notice “Again he sent out other slaves saying, ‘Tell those who have been invited,’ so it’s the same group being invited again, “Tell those who have been invited, ‘Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fattened livestock are all butchered and everything is ready; come to the wedding feast.’ That clearly is an indication that the redemption price had been paid, everything for the kingdom was prepared. But, verse 5, “But they paid no attention and went their way, one to his own farm, another to his business and the rest seized his slaves and mistreated them and killed them. So we have a second offer, it came in the Book of Acts, it went out to the same group, to Israel, and it too was rejected. Some paid no attention; others killed the apostles who offered it. How many invitations to the wedding feast in all? Two. And how did they respond to the two invitations? Both times they rejected. So what next? Verse 7, “But the king was enraged and sent his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and set their” what on fire? “their city on fire.” What city is that? Jerusalem. What year? AD70! Verse 8, “Then he said to his slaves, ‘The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. 9Go therefore to the main highways, and as many as you find *there*, invite to the wedding feast.’ So an invitation is going to go out to a different group. It’s not Jews. Who must they be? Gentiles. Yeah, that’s us in verse 10, the real nasty people. “Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered together all they found, both evil and good; and the wedding hall was filled with dinner guests.” Anyone that would receive the offer. That’s how we get involved in this thing, we’re the riff raff, we’re not the people originally invited to the wedding feast, but the original group rejected two offers and their city was destroyed and so the offer went out to anyone who would receive it. And that parable is sketching for you the structure of the Gospels and the Book of Acts. In the Gospels clearly an invitation to the Jews is rejected, in the Acts clearly a second invitation to the Jews and as it is gradually rejected the invitation begins to go out more and more to the Gentiles.

Now both periods were stock full of signs, miracles and wonders and the reason is simple; anytime the kingdom is near the powers of that miraculous age are manifested. But as the kingdom offer is withdrawn the miraculous powers of that age are also withdrawn. People don't understand that the kingdom is the age of these powers, not the church, the kingdom. And when we enter the kingdom we'll see a miracle every day, every single day there will be miracles. But now, miracles are rare; then the lamb will lie with the wolf, the child will lead a bear, the infant will play by the vipers den, the sower will overtake the reaper, the hills will flow with wine, a miraculous world full of the powers of that age. They only showed up in the Gospels and Acts because the kingdom was on the threshold of coming. But the nation Israel rejected and now we have this interregnum, the Church, an interadvent age during which the miraculous is rare, very rare in comparison to what is coming in the future kingdom. This of course does not mean that there are not miracles done here and there by the direct hand of God. But it is certainly not the norm and the gift is certainly not given to human beings despite all the claims that are made. Stay away from those people, they are manipulating you and deceiving you.

Now to the fifth gift listed by the apostle Paul, the gift of **prophecy**. This is a foundational gift. It was necessary for the founding of the church because they needed new revelation. If the Law of Moses was no longer in effect as Romans 10:4 says, Christ fulfilled the Law and as the Book of Hebrews says, then what law are we under? We have to be under some law. Answer, the Law of Christ. But that had to be revealed and the prophet was the one who revealed it, piece by piece, part by part until the NT was complete. Turn to Ephesians 2:20 where Paul says this gift was foundational. In verse 20 he says of the Church, "having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord," You see that apostle and prophet were foundational to the Church and you also see there is further building taking place upon the foundation. So the gift of prophet is clearly stated by the word of God to be a foundation gift. It's a metaphor from construction. You lay the foundation and then you build on the foundation. Once the foundation is laid you no longer keep laying the foundation. You go on and build the rest of the structure. And so by this metaphor we get one line of evidence that this gift is no longer being given

but was only given in the initial stage of the church. Once the foundation was laid this gift ceased to be given.

Now what exactly was this gift? It is common today for some to say prophecy is just proclaiming the word in the sense of a Bible teacher. However, there is a very large difference between one who proclaims the word by teaching and by prophesying. The difference is that the prophet does it under divine inspiration but the teacher is not inspired. Therefore the prophet is proclaiming the word inerrantly, the teacher errantly. So I do not think that the gift of prophecy is simply proclaiming the Bible in the sense that a Bible teacher does. I think that a prophet is one who proclaims the word under divine inspiration and therefore, from the very nature of the gift as revelatory of the word of God. And if you will turn with me to 1 Cor 13:8 the Bible explicitly states that prophecy will be done away. Notice, "Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease, if there is knowledge, it will be done away." There are three gifts that Paul states explicitly will cease. Knowledge we've already seen, prophecy and notice smack dab in the middle of those two is tongues. All three he says will be done away or cease. The point is they won't go on like faith, hope and love in verse 13. Somehow you have to explain when these three cease in contrast to the other three that remain. So I'm saying Eph 2:20 says prophecy was a foundational gift and here it says it will cease. So it makes sense to me this passed away in the 1st century. And I would suggest very strongly that it ceased in AD96 when John the prophet wrote the Revelation. At the end of that book it says, do not let anyone add or take away from this book. It's a warning divinely placed at the closing of the NT canon so that no one gets it in his noodle that he's going to write the 67th book of the Bible. No, God has been silent so far as verbal revelation since the Revelation. He Himself said so, let no one add or take away, lest the plagues of this book be added unto him. So stay away from anyone that says they are a prophet or they got a word from God. They are adding to the word of God and God said don't listen to that dreamer of dreams, he is not a prophet of God and I am testing you to see whether you love Me or not. The issue is love of God. Do you love God so much as to trust Him over your experience of some person claiming to have a word from God, which is the claim of a prophet.

Now for the nature of prophecy. The prophet was the mouthpiece of God. The origin of the concept of prophet actually begins in Exodus when Moses was

scared to talk to Pharaoh so God said I will give you Aaron as your prophet and you will put your words in his mouth and he will speak them for you. So the idea is that the prophet is merely a mouthpiece, he does not speak on his own initiative, he speaks only on the initiative of another. And of course then the prophet of God speaks only on the initiative of God and when he speaks under inspiration of God speaks only the word of God. So first, he is the mouthpiece of God. Second, the genuine prophets spoke authoritatively. This should be obvious from the fact that whatever he spoke was not his words but God's words. Therefore since God is the authority whatever the genuine prophet spoke came with authority. This means that you have to do what the prophet says because it originated with God. Now as a quick aside, there were also false prophets and so there had to be a means of testing a proclaimed prophet to identify the true from the false and that will be the next gift we will look at called 'discerning of spirits.' But for now just understand that if the prophet was genuine then he spoke with authority. Third, the prophet engaged in fore-telling and forth-telling. Fore-telling is what you normally think of with the prophet, as one who tells the future and if you turn to Acts 11:28 you'll see an example of this at work. In verse 27, "Now at this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch." These men had the prophetic gift. Verse 28, "One of them named Agabus stood up and began to indicate by the Spirit that there would certainly be a great famine all over the world." And upon reflection Luke says, "And this took place in the reign of Claudius." That is the fore-telling of this Agabus was accurate. He predicted it, it was fulfilled. To be specific it was fulfilled in the years AD46-47. It was a near term prophecy that was fulfilled in a series of famines throughout Rome during Claudius' reign. Josephus records it in his *Book of Antiquities*, Seutonius records it in his *Lives of the Caesars*, Tacitus records it in his *Annals*, Dio Cassius records it in his *History* and Orosius records it in his book *History*. So we have voluminous extra-Biblical data that substantiates what Luke substantiated, that indeed this series of famines did occur just as Agabus predicted. How did he predict it? Answer; he had the gift of prophecy. Now that's the common way you think of the gift of prophet, one who fore-tells the future. But prophets both in the OT and NT also engaged in forth-telling. And if you turn to Acts 2 you'll see an example of this. Forth-telling means to give a divine analysis or interpretation of a present event. It doesn't refer to the future, it's something happening right in front of your eyeballs but what does it mean. Isn't it interesting that humans all look at the same data and some humans say it means this and other

humans say it means that. And they don't agree. Why is that? We're all looking at the same thing? Because humans have presuppositions that tell them how to interpret the data. And your naïve if you don't think you have presuppositions. Every human being has presuppositions and he can't get rid of them; if he gets rid of one set he immediately picks up another set. Well here is an event in Acts 2 that had several interpretations. And isn't it interesting, it's the first incidence of a spiritual gift operating called tongues. Oooohhh tongues, don't let this spook you out, it was known languages as you can easily see from verses 5 and 6. It was the Day of Pentecost and you had Jews from all over the Roman world in Jerusalem. And notice verse 6, they were bewildered because each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language or technically, 'dialect,' their own dialect, with all the nuances of a dialect. Most of us may speak English in America but go to the deep south; Georgia or the Carolinas and try to understand what they're saying, it's clearly a different dialect. So this is a strange phenomena reported in verse 6. In verses 9, 10 and 11 you get an idea of the various dialects they were speaking in. The point is these were known languages and they were hearing in verse 11 in their own tongues the mighty deeds of God." Which means they were getting snippets of what God had done through Jesus Christ, the great miracles Jesus Christ did, Jesus Christ turned water into wine, Jesus Christ cast a demon out of the man of Gerasa, Jesus Christ healed the blind and deaf and mute, Jesus Christ manifested the powers of the age to come in great signs and wonders. Now how are they supposed to interpret this? What does this mean? They're asking that in verse 12 and they're not asking what are they saying, they know the words, but what is the significance of them speaking these things in languages they've never learned. These guys are Galileans, they never spoke our language, much less our dialects! "What does this mean?" And some were saying in verse 13, the explanation was "They are full of sweet wine." That's their spin, their analysis. But Peter, now watch, because Peter is going to now give the divine analysis of tongues in the Koine Greek. First he discards the explanation of verse 13, that they've been drinking wine. Verse 15, "These men are not drunk, as you suppose," and he gives a natural explanation, it's only 9 am in the morning, they couldn't be drunk yet, c'mon. But, verse 16, "this is that which was spoken of through the prophet Joel and he goes into a quote from Joel 2, not to show all this is fulfilled but to show in particular that the tongues are explained as a pouring forth of the Spirit. Jesus had said ten days before that He was going to send the Spirit. And Peter is saying this is

that, he's giving a divine interpretation of the tongues by way of the gift of prophecy, designating them as of the Spirit. So he's not fore-telling here in the sense of making a prediction but forth-telling in the sense of an explanation for the current event of tongues.

So I gave you two examples of the gift of prophecy; Agabus fore-telling and Peter forth-telling, the prophet did some of both. This gift was foundational to the church and is no longer being given because it was instrumental to writing new Scripture for the newly formed Church; it was active until the last NT book was written, the Book of Revelation, when it was done away. The next prophet to come is Elijah. We actually already know his name. Elijah is predicted to come before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and so if someone claims to be a prophet and they're not Elijah it's very simple, they are not a true prophet they are a false prophet.

Now the next gift is 1 Cor 12:10, the **distinguishings of spirits**. This is the supernatural ability to distinguish between a true and a false prophet. It's not someone who just has a sense that that's not true. It's someone who has supernatural revelation that a prophet is false or true. It was given as a check on the prophet and is coupled with that gift. Now you had particular need of this gift at this time for two reasons. First of all because you had an abundance of people running around claiming to be prophets. History is not usually that way; you have people here and there of course but nothing like what they had in the 1st century. The reason is because God gifted prophets so Satan was countering that by sending out false prophets. We still have some, yeah, but the 1st century church was being bombarded by them so God also gave some Christians the gift to **distinguish the spirits**. This gift was also needed because the NT was in formation. People forget that the NT didn't just fall out of heaven into the lap of every member of the congregation. James was written, it's the first NT book, and it was sent to some Jewish believers outside the land of Israel and James was copied and distributed to other congregations over many years. The Gospel of Matthew is the second NT book and you have the same story there, then Galatians and 1 Thessalonians and so forth. The NT was forming over a period of about 70 years and so you may be at Thessalonica and the only NT Bible you have for twenty years is 1 and 2 Thessalonians and maybe you got Philippians next because that city was nearby. Of course they had the OT Bible but as far as the NT was concerned that had to come together piece by piece and every

congregation may have different pieces. So if you just have a few pieces and yet new pieces are coming through true prophets but alongside those true prophets you have false prophets in abundance, you need this gift of **distinguishings of spirits** to help you distinguish the true from the false.

If you turn to 2 Thessalonians 2, I think you'll see how these false prophets could really agitate a congregation. In verse 1, "Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, ²that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come." They had been shaken up by some false prophetic ideas that had come into the congregation and you can see there were three avenues they may have come in by: a spirit, a message, or a letter as if from us. The spirit is this is one who claimed to have a prophetic utterance but he was a false prophet, the message was an oral message that someone might have come in and delivered and a letter as if from us is a false letter, written in Paul's name or Silas' name but not written by Paul or Silas. So you had these three avenues of possible deception and this had clearly agitated them because the subject is the day of the Lord and if the day of the Lord had come, if you know anything about that teaching, you do not want to be in that horrible period of world history that is coming. It stirred them up to think they were in it but the Christian is promised rapture before the day of the Lord and so Paul reminds them of that to calm them down. But I want to point you back to the possible avenue of deception in verse 2 where Paul says, "a spirit." That's a person who claimed to have a prophetic utterance. There were many of these people in the 1st century that were trying to draw people aside to following them. One of the signs of a false prophet is they try to get you to follow them. I don't care if you follow me; I care if you follow Jesus Christ. I direct you to Him. And if I direct you to Him then yes, follow me, follow my example, but you only do that because I'm following Him.

Now with the NT information you needed who in the church? People who had the supernatural gift of **distinguishing spirits**. People who could tell, supernaturally, this is the word of God. This is not some kind of intuition; it has nothing to do with that. They could tell supernaturally whether the spirit behind the utterance was of a true prophet or a false. So this gift was given in conjunction with the gift of prophet as a check on the prophet, much

in the same way that interpretation of tongues was given in conjunction with tongues, as a check on the tongues. So since they were given in conjunction and the gift of prophecy has ceased then the gift of distinguishing of spirits has ceased too.

Now you say, what do we do today to detect false prophets if we don't have this gift. Well, first of all, there are no prophets today. So if someone claims to be one they are a false prophet and they're just preying on ignorant Christians that do not understand that the gift of prophecy was primarily for writing the NT! So there is no such thing as a true prophet today. I don't care how pretty they are, how nice they are, what they wear, whether they have a TV show or not, what they can do. I am not interested, over and out, period, they are not the mouthpiece of God. I have the OT and NT and they are the final authority.

Second, I'll show you one more passage on the distinguishing of spirits. 1 John 4 and I think this is the test I just described in the sense that we have the Bible and you put them up against the Bible. What makes the 1 John passage interesting is it was written much later, people debate the date of writing and some put it as early as the mid-60's but most put it much later, say in the 80's, which if that is the case then the gift of **discerning of spirits** had ceased since John was the only living prophet. So without the gift and most of the NT canon complete, then all you have to do to identify a false prophet is test his theology, is he orthodox. The test put forth here is specific to the false prophets the audience was facing, namely those who denied that Jesus had come in the flesh. Notice verse 1, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. ²By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God;" ³and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the *spirit* of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world." The particular heresy of this group of false prophets was Jesus Christ did not come in a human body, that was a heresy later known as docetism, the idea that Jesus only appeared to be a true human but really he was just a phantom. John's audience was trying to resist these people and John says here's a simple test; if they say this they're false prophets. Notice verse 6, this statement seems to put 1 John as a later book because of the test of truth and error, "We are from God;" we being the

apostles and prophets, “he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.” In other words, the one who listens to the NT apostolic writings, the confirmed messengers of God, these are the ones who are of God. Everybody else who does not listen to the apostolic writings is a false prophet, don’t pay attention to them. So today the test for a false prophet or false teaching is always to ask, “Do they measure up to the Scripture? Are they orthodox in theology?”

Alright, the last two gifts in 1 Cor 12:10 are also coupled; **tongues** and **interpretation of tongues**. We’ll spend most of our time on tongues since its quite clear what interpretation of tongues refers to. First of all, turn to Acts 2 again. We already turned there but something that is necessary to point out is that the tongues were known languages. Note in Acts 2:6 the crowds were bewildered because each was hearing the twelve speak in his own language, clearly a known language, verse 7, the tongues speakers were Galileans, so these were not native languages. Again in verse 8, “we each hear them in our own language to which we were born.” We hear non-natives speaking our native language. How did they do that without studying? And in the same dialect? What is going on here? And verse 11, “we hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God.” So they understood the tongues, they were native speakers, there was no need for an interpreter. The big point is the tongues in Acts and we could go through Acts 10 and Acts 19 and find the same thing. And that same thing is that these were known languages. And this isn’t really a debate, everyone admits that in Acts these are known languages. However, if you come back to 1 Corinthians chapter 14, people debate in these chapters whether these are known languages because chapter 13 says something about tongues of angels and therefore they argue that those are not known languages. So the tongues in Acts were known and the tongues in 1 Corinthians were unknown is one argument people make to try and make room for tongues today. I don’t buy that because for one, every time an angel speaks it speaks a human language, never an unknown human language. For two, notice 1 Cor 14:9, “So also you, unless you utter by the tongue speech that is clear, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air. ¹⁰There are, perhaps, a great many kinds of languages in the world, and no *kind* is without meaning. ¹¹If then I do not know the meaning of the language, I will be to the one who speaks a barbarian, and the one who speaks will be a barbarian to me.” For all intents

and purposes Paul seems to think the tongues speaking that was going on was languages in the world. So I don't really think there is any license for saying the tongues in Corinthians is different than the tongues in Acts, except for the cases where he's talking about ecstatic utterances, which were pagan tongues, but as far as legitimate tongues in Acts and Corinthians, they all sound like known languages to me, languages spoken by someone who had never studied the language, so obviously supernatural.

So we've identified the nature of tongues, they are known languages. Second, the purpose of tongues and for this drop down a few verses to 1 Cor 14:20 and we want to make several observations. "Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature." The tongues were given in the infancy of the church and I don't have time to trace the argument all the way through but I would argue that the infancy period ended in AD70 with the destruction of Jerusalem. The main idea is that tongues were given in the infancy and then they ceased of themselves. Notice their purpose in verse 21 and 22. "In the Law it is written, "BY MEN OF STRANGE TONGUES AND BY THE LIPS OF STRANGERS I WILL SPEAK TO THIS PEOPLE, AND EVEN SO THEY WILL NOT LISTEN TO ME," says the Lord." What people? Where is that text coming from? Look in your margin. Isa 28:11ff. That's a passage speaking to what people? Jews or Gentiles? Jews. It's a warning that God will send judgment on the Jews by a foreign army, an army that speaks a foreign language. Things were ramping up for judgment against Israel because they had rejected the first offer of the kingdom and now they were in the process of rejecting the second offer of the kingdom. The kingdom offer was still there but the tongues were a warning that judgment was on the horizon for Israel if they didn't repent. Verse 22 confirms, "So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophecy *is for a sign*, not to unbelievers but to those who believe." So tongues are a sign for unbelievers. Unbelieving who in the context? Unbelieving Jews. Isa 28 was written to unbelieving Jews and God gave tongues as a sign gift to warn unbelieving Jews of the first century that judgment was coming if they didn't repent. The judgment came in AD70 when Jerusalem was destroyed. After that point there is no more warning to the Jews because the judgment has already come. That means the purpose of tongues has passed.

So then 1 Cor 13:8 makes perfect sense. “Love never fails; but if *there are gifts of prophecy*, they will be done away; if *there are tongues*, they will cease; if *there is knowledge*, it will be done away. ⁹For we know in part and we prophesy in part; ¹⁰but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. ¹¹When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. ¹²For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known. ¹³But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.” Again there’s this maturity idea in context, moving from childhood to manhood. But most people ignore that and say, well, it says in verse 10 that these things will go away “when the perfect comes” and that’s got to be the Second Coming of Jesus Christ because they look at verse 12 and say “now I know in part, but then I will know fully” and they say, that’s the Second Coming, at that time I’m going to be omniscient. Well that can’t be, that’s a theological mistake. Even in a resurrection body you’re not going to become omniscient; I’m not going to become omniscient, we’re still creatures, we never lose our creaturehood even though we get a resurrection body. So that observation opens up possibilities, we’re not talking about a time when we become omniscient because that time will never come. Further, that would mean the church is still in its infancy. 2000 years and the church is still a baby. That doesn’t seem to fit at all. The NT seems to indicate the church moved out of infancy in the 1st century. So there are reasons why we do not take this passage to refer to the Second Coming of Christ.

There’s something else here and the hint is in verse 13, it says, “But now faith, hope, love, abide these three;” Now those remain with the Church, do they not, until the end? So this passage is talking about some things that remain until the end and some things that do not remain till the end. And the three things that do not remain till the end are listed in verse 8 as “prophecy, tongues and knowledge.” The three gifts that do remain till the end are listed in verse 13, “faith, hope and love.” The passage is a contrast and a corrective.

Prophecy would be done away, knowledge would be done away, but notice tongues would cease. The tongues are unique because they are middle voice, which means they would just pass away in and of themselves. As I’ve indicated before I think this occurred in AD70 when the purpose of tongues came to a close. The tongues were a warning to unbelieving Jews of judgment

coming by foreign armies who spoke a foreign language. And who attacked in AD66-67? Rome. They didn't know an ounce of Hebrew and they didn't care to. They destroyed Jerusalem, razed it to the ground, cast the stones off the Temple Mount, 1,000,000 Jews died. Interestingly three early church historians report no believing Jews died. The reason is because they were reading Luke 21 and in Luke 21 Jesus told them when you see Jerusalem surrounded, get out of town. The story is that the Romans surrounded Jerusalem but realized they were short on supplies so they fell back to Caesarea and stocked up. When they backed off the believing Jews in Jerusalem fled across the Jordan and north to Pella. The Jews who remained in the city called them traitors but the Romans came back and wiped them out. So, at that point tongues ceased in and of themselves because the purpose of tongues, to warn them of a foreign army invasion, had been fulfilled. Therefore there was no purpose for tongues anymore. They were a sign pointing to near judgment. What passes today is nothing more than psychological or trained phenomena, those that utter ecstasy in pagan religions may be demonically influenced or indwelt.

The interpretation of tongues is clear enough, these people had never studied the languages and yet they were able to interpret. It's very interesting because 1 Cor 14 indicates the interpreters were known because the tongues speaker was not to speak unless an interpreter was present. So all they had to do was look around and see if Joe or Ben was there and if they weren't there then they were not permitted to speak. So these people were well known in the local churches to have the gift.

Alright, so much for those gifts, all nine of the gifts mentioned in 1 Cor 12:8-10 are either foundational gifts or sign gifts. They were great gifts and very important, but they've all ceased because their purpose has ceased. They just aren't necessary. What are necessary are the building gifts and I'd greatly encourage you to focus on the building gifts and discovering your gift so you can share it with us for our benefit and for the glory of God.

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