



The works or “gifts” of the Holy Spirit have been an item that have been disputed among believers for the past 2000 years. There are those who believe that the gifts are still in operation today. There are many who believe that they stopped at the conclusion of the Apostolic Age, when the last Apostle, John died sometime around 95-100 AD.

I believe that there has been a great misunderstanding of the workings of the Holy Spirit. The first thing I would like to make clear, is that the main purpose of why the Holy Spirit was given to the believers on that day of Pentecost (*Shavuot-Hebrew*) was to help the believers in their new life as a “new creature” that came forth because of their faith in Jesus and **all** that He did. Every true believer (both, back in that day and today) has been changed into a “new creation.” Paul explains this in 2Corinthians 5:17-19.

Now, as this “new creation,” in which Paul refers to as the “One New Man in Christ,” we become a totally **new species of being** that was never on this earth before. Every born again believer is now a child of the Living God, a joint heir along with Jesus, to everything that is in the Kingdom of Heaven. Paul writes of this in Ephesians 2:15, Ephesians 4:24 and Colossians 3:10. We are “new babies” in this new life and therefore, our Father has given us the Holy Spirit to teach us and help us to grow in this new life.

The Holy Spirit is truly the “breath of God.” God breathed into Adam and he became a living being. Jesus breathed onto the disciples and they became a “new species of being” who are now alive unto God. Yes, Jesus breathed the Holy Spirit into the hearts and lives of the Apostles. It was then that they were truly “born again.” (John 20:22,26-29)

In the three other Gospel accounts we read the promise Jesus gave to all His disciples in which He told them that the Holy Spirit **will** come and **will** help them in their lives as not only the messengers of God (apostles), but also simply as children of God. (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:17-18; Luke 24:49) Yes, the Holy Spirit would come and totally change their lives – and ours, in and through Jesus. The Holy Spirit is used to renew our dead spirit and He now makes our spirit alive unto God. But wait... There is more...

Jesus told His disciples that He must leave them but to wait for the Holy Spirit to come and **fill them** so that they may do the same works that He did **AND** even **greater works**. We read in John 14:12 that Jesus told His followers, *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believes on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and **greater works** than these shall he do; **because I go unto my Father.**”* The “greater work” was, and still is, bringing someone to salvation through their acceptance of all that Jesus did when He was crucified **AND** when He rose again on that Resurrection Day.

However, I would like to point out that Jesus said that **anyone who believes in Him** (Jesus) will do the **same works** that **He** (Jesus) **did**. That means **anyone**, both at that time and now. Jesus used the “gifts/workings of the Holy Spirit” in His ministry. He is telling us that all those who truly believe in Him will be able to do the same works He did through the power of the Holy Spirit. This is what happened when the Holy Spirit came to the Body on Pentecost.

We must remember that the most important reason that the Holy Spirit was given to the Body of believers at that time, as well as today, was to help us in this “new life” and also to help us in telling others about the wonderful works and “new life” that is found only in Jesus. God revealed this unique ability by allowing the disciples to speak in the native languages of those Jewish people that came from all the different parts of the known world at that time to observe the Feast of Pentecost/ Shavuot. What did they say in those languages? They declared the Good News of salvation that was now available through Jesus. (Acts 2:1-12)

We know that the disciples had to grow and learn of this new ability to work in the Holy Spirit. Yes, even though they walked with Jesus, we read about their own “faith issues.” In Matthew 17:20 when the disciples came to Jesus wondering why they could not cast out a demon, Jesus replied, *“**Because of your unbelief:** for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.”*

Yes, they had “issues” as we all have “issues” but, as we know, the Holy Spirit came and taught them the truth. The Holy Spirit is also here to lead and guide us now in all of God’s truth. The Holy Spirit will give us those things that we need to both help to bring the Good News of Jesus to the lost and to help each other as believers in our every day life, today.

If Jesus was simply speaking to the disciples for just that time concerning doing these wonderful things then why isn't it the same when he speaks to them about saving faith in Him. Was saving faith only to be given to those who lived in that generation? If that was the case than we all, you and me, are not truly saved. We can then say that salvation stopped at the end of the Apostolic age. I don't think so...

In 1Corinthians 12 and Romans 12 we find that there are 15 "spiritual gifts" or workings of the Holy Spirit that are listed. There are more. These gifts include; prophecy, serving, teaching, exhortation, ministering, giving, ruling, mercy, words of wisdom, words of knowledge, faith, healings, miracles, discerning of spirits, speaking in tongues and interpreting tongues.

Each of these gifts is a blessing to be given forth to either an unsaved individual or a member, or members, of the Body of Christ through the true believer in Jesus. When referring to these workings/gifts Paul states in 1Corinthians 14:1, "*Follow after charity (love), and **desire spiritual gifts**....*" Not only are these gifts (workings) available, but they are also to be desired. However, they are all to be brought forth in and with **the love of God** to and for others. We must understand that Paul is not only speaking to the Corinthian church at that time but rather he is speaking to the entire church, both at that time and for today.

Paul **never** states that the gifts were only for those Corinthians and Romans at that time, otherwise he would have made some mention of it. After all, he was writing to the Corinthian and Roman churches, not all the other churches. Did only those in Corinth and Rome have the ability to work in the gifts and not the other churches that Paul started and wrote to? We don't read of these gifts in all of His letters to the other churches. However, we know that they were used in those other churches. Hmm....

Have the Gifts of the Spirit ceased for today?

To come to the conclusion that the gifts and workings of the Spirit have ceased, some believers will cite 1Corinthians 13:8-10 "*Charity (love) never fails: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is **perfect** is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.*"

Their argument goes something like this - "See, things such as prophecies and tongues shall cease according to this scripture. We no longer need those 'gifts' because now we have the full Bible." They claim that is what Paul was referring to as "perfect" in verse 10. This word "perfect" means, "brought to its end; finished." Thus their conclusion: the gifts and workings of the Holy Spirit have come to an end because now we have the full Bible (the perfect) – expressly saying that we have the New Testament, so the gifts and workings of the Holy Spirit are no longer needed.

The problem with this argument is that it is incorrect to assume that the word "perfect" is a reference to the New Testament. Yes, it is the "perfect" Word of God. However, Paul and the other writers were not even thinking of a "New Testament." What Paul writes here is **NOT** a reference to the New Testament. Paul is referring to the knowledge that we now have in Jesus. In other words, we do not know it all!!! God is vast. Of course we do not know it all!!!

However, one day, when Jesus returns, we will see it all and experience all of God's Word and His Kingdom.. We must read the whole context. If we continue, then we read in 1Corinthians 13:12, "*For **now** we see through a glass, darkly; **but then** face to face: **now** I know in part; **but then** shall I know even as also I am known.*" Right now, we see and know only portions of the fullness of God. But... one day, when Jesus comes back, we shall see and experience it all!!!

Jesus Himself states that signs and wonders **will** follow **all** those who believe. Was he speaking of just those who believed in Him during the time of the Apostles and then it would be over? If so, then why didn't Jesus say that. Instead he said that "signs and wonders" **will follow ALL those who would believe in Him** – including those believers who came after the Apostles went home to be with the Lord. Nowhere in the Bible does it say to us explicitly that the workings of the Holy Spirit have stopped and that they were only for the time of the "Apostolic Age," no where. Those that say this are simply "presupposing" that they ended.

If the workings of the apostles and prophets were to be stopped after the time of the Apostles then so must the workings of the "evangelist and the pastor/teacher" be disallowed, as well. You can't pick and choose what is now needed and what has stopped. That forms anarchy in the Body of Christ.

Please, read the following scriptures:

Ephesians 4:7-8,11 - *“But to **each one of us** grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift. Therefore He says: “When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And **gave gifts to men**“...And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.”* Jesus gives the “gifts” and workings to all His people. If He gave them grace and mercy, then He gives us grace and mercy, today. If He gave them these gifts to use at that time, then He gives us His gifts to use, today.

1Corinthians 12:11 tells us – *“But all these work that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.”* It is the Holy spirit who gives these gifts to the Body of Christ. These “gifts” and workings of the Holy Spirit are given to believers to profit (for their betterment and to help) the Body, individually or as a whole. The same is true concerning the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, even today.

1Peter 4:11 – *“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God gives: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”* Whoever speaks and whoever renders service unto others they are to do it only in the power of God.

- *“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles (the mouthpiece for) of God...”* – this speaks to us to do the same, today.

- *“If any man minister...”* or help others in any way possible – aren’t we to do this today?

If we look in the scriptures we see that there is more than one writer telling us that the works of the Holy Spirit are for all believers – at that time and for today. We must understand that the early church believed that Jesus was coming back in their own lifetime. When He did not come, they had to seek after God and prepare the Body of Christ for the “long haul.” Thus, Paul, who was an apostle, also went into the teaching mode when he went to new areas.

The early believers did not know, nor did they ever think, that one day there would be a conglomeration of all their writings. They never thought of that. The “scripture” that all the writers in the New Testament used and spoke from was from what we refer to as the “Old Testament.” They interpreted it, through the unction of the Holy Spirit, to truly understand God’s Word and how it must be understood for the today because of what Jesus did.

Everything that is in the New Testament was first foretold in the Old Testament. Jesus was to come and bring us salvation. The Holy Spirit was to come after Jesus' resurrection. We see that Jesus specifically said this and left after forty days following His resurrection. The Holy Spirit then came ten days later and He is still with the believer to this day. Jesus is with the Father, waiting to return when the Father declares that it is time for Him to return.

The New Testament really came about as a "putting together" of the Gospels, Letters and Writings that were written, saved, and passed down. The early church began to collect these writings. Under the inspiration of God, these writings were preserved. People, who I believe were chosen by God, were then assigned and inspired by God to put these writings together so that we have the "New Testament" in the form we have it today.

We must realize that it took over 200-600 years for this to take place. The first complete copies of single New Testament letters appear around 200 AD, and the earliest copy of what we have now as the complete New Testament, "the Codex Sinaiticus," dates to 300 AD. God allowed this to take place so that we all can now have these Gospels, Letters and Writings to study and to see God's truth concerning Jesus and the Kingdom of God.

The most important thing that we must always remember is that the gifts and the works of the Holy Spirit are not necessarily given to an individual for that particular individual. The gift or work is usually for the benefit of someone other than the one working in that gift. In other words, the one who God may use to bring forth that gift is really the "mailman" or the messenger of that gift. The "gift" or work is actually for someone else. It is a "gift" or "work" that is to be given to someone other than the one who is working in that gift.

I say that because if we notice how the writers of the New Testament write to their readers. They always use the terms: we, them, others, the believers, etc. They never use the terms, I, me, mine or any other noun or pronoun that mentions anything concern one's own self. That is because, now as a child of God, our heart needs to be concerned about the things of God and about other people's needs and concerns-**first**. I, as a child of God, must put my own cares and concerns, my desires and my own wants, last on my list. As a child of God it is all about how I can serve God and serve others. That is very difficult for many of us to grasp.

What I am saying is that the gifts and workings of the Holy Spirit are not necessarily for our own needs. They are primarily to minister, to serve and assist others. Oh yes, God will meet my needs and I may use the works of the Holy Spirit as needed for myself. However, those “gifts” and works are really to be used to give to others. We are just the delivery people.

I know that may seem a little different for many of us to grasp. We have been so concerned about ourselves. However, if we read the New Testament, we will clearly see that, yes, I am saved and the Kingdom of Heaven is mine. However, the reason that I am saved is so that I can serve and give to others what they need. First, salvation and then assist them in any way that I can in the power and will of God. When I do that, I am truly blessing the heart of God.

Isn't that what Jesus told us. He didn't come for Himself. No, He came and died for others – you and I. He rose from the dead so that others, you and I, could become children of the Most High God. Now, as joint heirs with Jesus, we are to do the same. We are to do all things unto others so that others can be blessed and experience the love of God.

You see that is really what the “gifts” and works of the Holy Spirit are for. They are given to us by the Holy Spirit to be used by each of us, not for ourselves, but to bring forth the Kingdom of God into the lives and hearts of others. We must begin to see our lives the way that the writers of the New Testament wanted us to see and learn. The Kingdom of God is really about serving God and serving others - first and primarily. We have skewed this understanding but it is time that we truly return to the full context of the New Testament and what Jesus taught.

In Part 2 of this essay we will review the workings and gifts of the Holy Spirit. The most important thing to remember is that the Holy Spirit is now here for all of God's children. The Holy Spirit is given to all of us for the main purpose of understanding and to help us to walk in our faith and our salvation in Jesus. Jesus said the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, will come and He will lead God's people into all truth, God's truth. (John 15:26) The Holy Spirit has come!!!

Yes, the Holy Spirit is here today and He is within all the believers, today. The Holy Spirit will come along side us and within us, to lead and guide us throughout our life here on this earth.

This is what it means to be called the “One New Man” or the “One New Creature”
in Messiah/Christ.