

The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

1 Corinthians 12:8-11

1. The Description of Spiritual Gifts (vs.8-10)

Paul's description of the gifts of the Spirit is not intended to be a complete catalogue of every gift which He gives to the church (cf. Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:8-10, 28; Eph 4:11). These gifts were common for the experience of the local churches at the time, and so they would not have required such an exhaustive list (cf. Gal. 3:5). The gifts which Paul describes here, and the way in which he describes them, are part of the larger purpose of his corrective teaching in chapters 12-14.

2. The Effecting of Miracles (v.10a)

This is a general description of the manifestation of the power of God that was evident to men and included supernatural healings, exorcisms, and other powerful acts (Matt. 7:22; 13:58; Acts 8:7, 13; Heb. 2:4). This general category of supernatural displays of power are also described as signs and wonders (Acts 2:22; cf. Ex. 7:3; Ps. 135:9; Jn. 4:46).

A. A Definition:

A miracle is an observable phenomenon which can only be attributed to God's abnormal expression of power because of its extraordinary character. The purpose of a miracle is to bring glory to God (Matt. 9:8; John 9:3; cf. Josh. 2:9-12). Additionally, God may use miracles to authenticate His message (Judg. 6:17ff; Luke 5:24) as well as to bring blessing (2 Ki. 4:1-7; Luke 7:11-15) or judgment to people (Num. 16:28-35; Acts 5:5, 9-10).

B. A Distinction

There is a difference between God working a miracle (Ex. 3:2; 16:3; Dan. 6:16ff) and the Holy Spirit giving the gift of effecting miracles to an individual (Acts 2:43; 3:6; cf. Ex. 4:21). God had given the ability of accomplishing His miraculous works to some individuals according to His will (1 Cor. 12:11).

C. A Danger

False messengers equipped with phony tricks or demonic powers are continually dangerous. The enemy has animated false religions so that they worship demons and not God (Lev. 17:7; Ps. 106:37; 1 Cor. 10:20). Demons have been shown to have great power (Mk. 5:3-4), the ability to convince men that they know hidden mysteries (Acts 16:16), to proclaim the truth (Acts. 16:17-18), and to perform signs (Rev. 16:13-14; 19:20) which are extremely deceptive (cf. Mt. 24:24).