



# Systematic Theology

A study of the major doctrines of Scripture

TOPIC 6 – THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH  
LESSON 108 – SPIRITUAL GIFTS: MIRACULOUS GIFTS

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# Authentication

- ▶ At critical times throughout redemption history, God authenticated His messengers by empowering them to perform miracles and signs.
- ▶ During the Exodus from Egypt and the establishment of the nation of Israel, God validated the roles of Moses and Joshua through supernatural deeds that He accomplished through them (Exodus 4:3-4, 30; 7:10, 12; 17:5-6; Numbers 16:46-50; Josh. 10:12-14).
- ▶ In the face of Israel's ultimate apostasy centuries later, the ministries of Elijah and Elisha were similarly authenticated by signs and wonders, including raising the dead (1 Kings 17:9-24; 18:41-45; 2 Kings 1:10-12; 2:8, 14; 4:1-7, 18-41; 5:1-19; 6:6, 17).

# Authentication

- ▶ In the New Testament, the ministry of Jesus was also confirmed by miracles and healings (John 2:11, 23; 3:2; 4:54; 6:2, 14; 7:31; 10:37-38; 12:37; 20:30). These works were done to “bear witness” about who Jesus was as God in human flesh and the Messiah (John 10:25).
- ▶ Acts 2:22 “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—”
- ▶ During Jesus’ ministry the disciples were given power to heal and to cast out demons (Matt. 10:1, 8; Mark 6:12-13).
- ▶ After the ascension the disciples continued to see their message validated by the working of miracles and signs.

# Authentication

- ▶ During the birth of the New Testament church there was validating miracles and signs, including the ability of the Apostles to speak in other languages (Acts 2:4-11) so that everyone heard the message they preached in their own language.
- ▶ Gentile believers were enabled to work signs as an evidence of their genuine conversion (Acts 10:46).
- ▶ Hebrews 2:3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, 4 God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?



# Revelation

- ▶ This level of miraculous authentication was necessary at a time when the church was still being established and the Scriptures still being written. The Apostles and Prophets laid down the doctrinal foundation by direct revelation from the Holy Spirit (John 14:26; 16:12-15; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Peter 3:15-16).
- ▶ Revelatory gifts were obviously needed in order to complete the task of laying this doctrinal foundation and the sign gifts were also necessary to authenticate their claim to be God's spokesmen (2 Cor. 12:12).
- ▶ Once the Apostolic age ended and the New Testament completed the canon of Scripture, the Scripture itself was self-authenticating as the sufficient and only inspired revelation of God for the church.
- ▶ We will address *cessationism* in a future lesson – today we will simply seek to define what the miraculous were and how they were used to edify the church.

# Working Miracles

- ▶ A miracle can be broadly defined as an extraordinary work of God in which He suspends or overrides the normal courses of nature so that the result cannot be explained by any natural cause.
- ▶ Miracles are distinct from acts of Providence, in which God works through natural means to accomplish His sovereign purposes.
- ▶ Those given this gift were able to perform supernatural signs and wonders (Acts 2:22; 14:3; 2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:3-4).
- ▶ The New Testament does not show us the disciples having power over nature (weather, etc.), but they did exhibit power at will over demons, disease, and death (Acts 9:41-42; 20:7-12).

# Healing

- ▶ Gifts of healing denote supernatural power over disease (1 Cor. 12:9, 28).
- ▶ These healings recorded in Scripture were always immediate, undeniable, and complete (Matt. 8:2-3; 9:1-8; 20:29-34; 21:14; Mark 1:42; 8:22-26; 10:52; Luke 17:11-21; John 5:1-9; Acts 3:8; 14:8-18).
- ▶ Miraculous healings served to authenticate God's messenger (John 10:38; Acts 2:22; Rom. 15:18-19), not merely to restore the sick to physical health. That explains why Paul did not heal himself (Gal. 4:13) or some of his closest friends (Phil. 2:27; 1 Tim. 5:23; 2 Tim. 4:20).
- ▶ The result of these healings was that people heard and believed the gospel (Acts 9:42).

# Prophecy

- ▶ Prophets in the New Testament received and declared new revelation from God (Acts 11:27-28; 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Peter 1:21). This at times was predictive in nature (Acts 21:10-11). Prophets in Scripture claiming to receive and proclaim divine revelation are never allowed to be wrong and were always to be tested against the standard of orthodoxy (“the faith” – Rom. 12:6) for affirmation.



# Words of Wisdom/Knowledge Distinguishing Between Spirits

- ▶ Words of Wisdom and Knowledge (1 Cor. 12:8) involved the individual receiving and declaring revelation from God and applying it to everyday life (Matt. 13:54; Mark 6:2; Acts 6:10; James 1:5; 3:17; 2 Peter 3:15).
- ▶ Peter demonstrates this when he recognized the spiritual duplicity of Ananias (Acts 5:3) and by Paul, who perceived that a slave girl was possessed by an evil spirit (Acts 16:16-18).

# Speaking in Tongues – Interpreting Tongues

- ▶ The word translated “tongues” means simply “languages.”
- ▶ This gift manifested an ability to fluently speak in a foreign language and dialects unknown to the speaker in order to communicate the gospel to the lost who understood that language.
- ▶ The gift of interpretation was necessary to validate the message being preached – as the majority of the congregation and the person speaking in tongues did not understand the language that was being spoken (1 Cor. 14:26-27).
- ▶ If there was no interpreter, then the tongue speaker was instructed to remain silent (1 Cor. 14:28).

# Speaking in Tongues – Interpreting Tongues

- ▶ Examining the Rules for the Use of the Gift of Tongues 1 Cor. 14
- ▶ Paul addresses the misuse of the gift and lays down rules for proper use to demonstrate when the gift is authentic and when it is fraudulent.
- ▶ This was necessary because of the Oracle of Delphi and their influence in the understanding of the people in and around Corinth of receiving divine revelation.
- ▶ The first abuse noted is that those speaking in tongues were speaking mysteries and edifying themselves (1 Cor. 14:1-5).
- ▶ The second abuse was that the language spoken was not an actual language but mere babbling and useless (1 Cor. 14:6-12).

# Speaking in Tongues – Interpreting Tongues

- ▶ The third abuse was use of the gift without an interpreter which made the message unknowable and as a result, not edifying (1 Cor. 14:13-17).
- ▶ The rules for proper use of the gift include:
  - ▶ 1. The gift is for the benefit of the lost who need to hear the gospel in their own language to understand it and believe (1 Cor. 14:22-25).
  - ▶ 2. The gift must edify the church, as all the gifts are designed to do (1 Cor. 14:26).
  - ▶ 3. In the meeting of the church, tongues were only to be spoken by 2 or at the most 3 people, speaking one at a time, being interpreted for the church to judge what is said (1 Cor. 14:27-33), otherwise no one was to speak in tongues.



# Speaking in Tongues – Interpreting Tongues

- ▶ 4. Because this gift was for the purpose of preaching the gospel to the lost when the congregation gathered, and since women are forbidden from teaching and having authority over men in the church as pastors, then women were not to use tongues in the gathering of the church (1 Cor. 14:34-35).
- ▶ If any of these 4 rules are violated, or if the language spoken is not a known human language (unknown to the speaker), then whatever is being spoken is not a use of the gift of tongues.

# The Best Gift

- ▶ 1 Cor. 12:31 But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way. 13:1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing. 4 Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; 5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; 6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8 Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part. 10 But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. 11 When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. 12 For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. 13 And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.