

"And To Another ..."

"... *gifts of healing in the one Spirit, and to another workings of miracles* ..." (1 Cor. 12:9b-10a).

"*Gifts of healing*" and "*working of miracles*" are the fourth and fifth of the spiritual gifts which Paul identifies. One must bear in mind that each of the nine gifts were "miraculous" -- none could have possessed either of these gifts apart from a miracle, yet while all nine were miraculous, the gift of healing and miracles set forth in an extraordinary way, the supernatural aspect of what they did.

In early instructions of the two terms "*disciples*" and "*apostles*" one learned that while all apostles were disciples; not all disciples were apostles. The same comparison can be made distinguishing between gifts of healings and miracles: while all gifts of healings were miracles, not all miracles were gifts of healing. Why such a distinction, then?

First, many miracles wrought affected nature and her laws; man was only incidentally affected. In his gospel, John records miracles which Jesus wrought which affected both nature and human life. Jesus turned water to wine and fed 5,000 men with five loaves and two fishes. In addition to these there was the miraculous drought of fishes (John 2, 6, 21). Each of these three were contrary to nature, defying natural law. On the other hand, the healing of the infirm man; the gift of sight to the blind man; the resurrection of Lazarus and Jesus from the dead were all physical blessings to man directly affecting him (John 5, 9, 11, 20).

Miracles which demonstrated that God is Lord over nature are found in both testaments. The ten plagues wrought through Moses (Exo. 7-11); the dividing of the red sea (Exo. 14); the manna in the wilderness and water from a rock fed and quenched the thirst of likely 2,000,000 plus Israelites (Exo.16:15; Num. 20:8); the crossing of Jordan (Josh. 3); the collapse of Jericho's walls (Josh. 6); these all serve to show that God can bend nature and she to do whatever God wishes. And those with the gift of miracles also demonstrated that their Lord was Lord, just as Paul said He was "*far above all principles and powers ...*" (Eph. 1:21) and, while acts which showed control of nature are not frequently recorded, we doubt not such deeds were done.

On the other hand, many healings are recorded: the healing of the lame man (Acts 3); the many unspecified acts, yet clearly healings, are given. The multitudes of those sick carried into the street in the hope that as Peter

walked by his shadow might fall upon them and though would be healed (Acts 5:15); the similar acts of Paul in which handkerchiefs or aprons were carried from his body with the subsequent departing of disease and evil spirits from those holden by such (Acts 19:9f). Both Peter and Paul raised those who were dead (Acts 9; 20).

A second difference between gifts of healing and miracles was that while gifts of healing always was just that -- healing; miracles might be temporarily or even permanently injurious to the one or ones so affected. Ananais and Saphira both lost their lives because they lied to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5) and the sorcerer Bar Jesus was smitten temporary with blindness by Paul ("*for a season*" is the way the historian Luke records it) in Acts 13. Yet both gifts of healing and miracles were for the purpose of establishing the word and not those who were sick were always healed. Paul could (and did) heal diseases and cast out demons; but he left Trophimus sick at Miletus and the life threatening illness of Epaphroditus who came to Paul in Rome threatened him with double sorrow (2 Tim. 4:20; Phil. 2:25-27).

Jesus commissioned the apostles before His ascension, promising them the power they would have through their faith. He declared, "*And these signs shall follow them that believe. In my name shall they cast out demons; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall in no wise hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover*" (Mk. 16:17-18). The object of all such works is seen in these words: "*So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken unto them, was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs which followed. Amen*" (Mk. 16:19-20).

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