



Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us,

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# Understanding Spiritual Gifts

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let us use them. Romans 12:6

By Daniel Kriss

# Spiritual Gifts

(PART 1)

## Introduction

The theme verses for this study are **Romans 12:4-5** which say:

For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

In our studies this year we have come to understand that the church is a family – a group of people selected by God from every tribe, nation and tongue upon the earth to reflect His glory.

The Bible gives clear instructions about how the local church should operate and we have spent significant time considering these truths already.

Our first mini-series this year was called **The Body Concept** and in this study we looked at the importance of unity in diversity, the essential role of every member, what it means to be mutually dependent, and that God sovereignly selected each member with their strengths and weaknesses as a vital part of the whole.

Next we looked at **God's design for giving in the local church**. In this two-part series we examined what the Scripture teaches in this regard and then changed our whole church budget to ensure we follow the biblical pattern.

Recently we finished a 3-part series on **Church Leadership** which began by looking at the *preeminent leader* of the Church – Jesus Christ. We then looked at *pastoral leadership* for a number of weeks and then concluded the series by examining the *practical leadership* seen in the role of deacons and deaconesses.

Today we move into a new mini-series which deals with the spiritual gifts. This will be an exciting study as we seek to understand God's perspective on this all-important topic.

Today's message will be introductory in nature and will provide an overview of this topic. Join me as I preach a message entitled: **Spiritual Gifts Pt.1**

## Understanding the New Dispensation

Turn to Acts 2:1-47

On this particular day in history, probably 10 days after Jesus had ascended, at about 9AM **everything changed!**

The disciples of Jesus would never be the same again. Every believer from that moment on would be blessed beyond measure by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:4 tells us that **ALL** the disciples who were gathered in the upper room were "*filled*" with the Holy Spirit. This event is called the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

This was the moment that Jesus had referred to during His life on earth:

Luke 24:49 And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

Acts 1:4-5 And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

Before we go too much further, I would like to quickly summarise the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. This is by no means exhaustive, but it will help us to understand just how important His role is in our lives as a Christian and in the church-the body of Christ.

## **The Work of the Holy Spirit in the Life of the Believer:**

### **1. The Holy Spirit regenerates us:** John 3:5-8; Titus 3:5

*Titus 3:4-5 "But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit." 33*

### **2. The Holy Spirit sanctifies us:** 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2;

*2 Thessalonians 2:13 But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.*

### **3. The Holy Spirit empowers us:** Acts 1:8

*Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

### **4. The Holy Spirit confirms that we are the children of God:** Romans 8:16

*Romans 8:16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,*

### **5. The Holy Spirit seals us unto the day of redemption:** Ephesians 1:13; 4:30

*Ephesians 1:13 In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,*

### **6. The Holy Spirit guarantees our future resurrection/glorification:** 2 Cor.1:22; 2 Cor. 5:5

*2 Corinthians 5:5 He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.*

### **7. The Holy Spirit reveals the deep things of God:** 1 Corinthians 2:10

*1 Corinthians 2:10 these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.*

### **8. The Holy Spirit transforms us into the image of Christ:** 2 Corinthians 3:18

*2 Corinthians 3:18 And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.*

### **9. The Holy Spirit enables us to wait patiently for the future glory:** Galatians 5:5

*Galatians 5:5 For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness.*

### **10. The Holy Spirit strengthens our spirit:** Ephesians 3:16

*Ephesians 3:16 that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being,*

### **11. The Holy Spirit produces and develops fruit in the life of the believer:** Galatians 5:22-23

*Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.*

### **12. The Holy Spirit pours love into our hearts:** Romans 5:5

*Romans 5:5 And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.*

**13. The Holy Spirit teaches us:** 1 Corinthians 2:13; John 14:26

*1 Corinthians 2:13 And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.*

**14. The Holy Spirit gives joy:** 1 Thessalonians 1:6

*1 Thessalonians 1:6 And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit,*

**15. The Holy Spirit brings truth to our remembrance:** John 14:26

*John 14:26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.*

**16. The Holy Spirit comforts us:** Acts 9:31

*Acts 9:31 So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied.*

**17. The Holy Spirit helps us to pray:** Romans 8:26-27; Jude 1:20

*Romans 8:26 Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.*

**18. The Holy Spirit reveals Christ to us:** John 16:14-15

*John 16:14 He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.*

**19. The Holy Spirit distributes spiritual gifts to the believer:** 1 Corinthians 12:4-7

*1 Corinthians 12:4-7 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.*

It is this final aspect of Spirit's work that will be our focus in the weeks to come.

Having briefly looked at the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer, let us now take a few moments to look up some relevant passages related to spiritual gifts and make some general comments.

## **Introductory Comments about the Spiritual Gifts**

**Read: 1 Corinthians 12:1-11; Romans 12:3-8; 1 Peter 4:10-11; Ephesians 4:7-16**

At this point I just want to give you a few introductory comments about spiritual gifts which we will build on in the weeks to come.

### **1. Defining Spiritual Gifts**

A simple definition: "Spiritual abilities given by God for the purpose of building up the church."

Another definition is, "A spiritual gift is a special attribute given by the Holy Spirit to every member of the body of Christ according to God's grace for use within the context of the body."

Every believer at the moment of conversion is given at least one spiritual gift.

### **2. Identifying the Source of Spiritual Gifts**

All of the passages that we looked up state clearly that the gift or gifts given are from God. They are "spiritual" gifts not conferred by man but given by the Spirit of God.

*1 Corinthians 12:11 All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apports to each one individually as he wills.*

### **3. Examining the Purpose of Spiritual Gifts**

The purpose of these spiritual gifts is clearly defined in both 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4. Look at what Paul says:

*1 Corinthians 12:7 To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.*

*Ephesians 4:7-12 But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.*

Your spiritual gift(s) are not for you! They are for the body. Failure to operate with your gifts will bring disunity and paralysis to the body.

### **4. Misunderstandings About the Spiritual Gifts**

- Giftedness is NOT spirituality. The dispensing of the gifts is not on the basis of spirituality but on God's sovereign choice (1 Cor 12:11)
- The fruit of the Spirit are not the same as the spiritual gifts.
- The spiritual gifts were not given to make us proud but to encourage dependence.
- Nobody has all the spiritual gifts.
- There is a clear distinction between spiritual gifts and natural talents.

## **Conclusion**

As we embark upon this journey into the Spiritual Gifts, ask the Lord to reveal the truth to you, and enable you to function in this church as He desires.

The spiritual gifts are given for two distinct purposes:

Growth of the Body and the Glory of God.

# Spiritual Gifts

(PART TWO)

## Introduction

There are three major problems in the church at large today as it relates to spiritual gifts.

1. The first problem is that far too few Christians are involved in a local church, but instead operate as a spectator on the sidelines. These Christians attend and enjoy the fellowship but are unprepared to be an active participant in the work. Sadly, they miss the joy associated with discovering and exercising their God-given gifts for the benefit of the whole.
2. The second problem relates to those who are busily engaged in the local church but are operating as square pegs in round holes because they are not functioning in a ministry which corresponds to their spiritual gifts.
3. The third problem relates to an incorrect view of the spiritual gifts which produces confusion and unbiblical practice.

Each of these problems will be addressed in this series on spiritual gifts.

## Understanding Some History & Viewpoints

As we begin this study we need to understand some history and viewpoints associated with the spiritual gifts. A survey of Christianity at large will present four general positions as it relates to the spiritual gifts:

### 1. Classic Pentecostalism

The historic beginning of the modern tongues movement took place in 1900 at the Bethel School of Topeka, Kansas. The founder, Charles Parham encouraged his students to examine the apostolic age to determine whether or not the baptism of the Holy Spirit was an event subsequent to salvation. One of his students, Miss Agnes Ozman, requested that hands be laid on her to receive the Holy Spirit. Moments later she began to speak only in the Chinese language and this lasted for three days. Charles Parham believed this incident to be the restoration of the Pentecostal power of the Book of Acts. Parham began an evangelistic effort in various cities which he identified as "Pentecostal" of the "full gospel." By 1905 there were over 25,000 converts in Texas alone. William Seymour, a black American minister came into contact with Charles Parham's teaching and was then called to Los Angeles where he lead the renowned Azusa Street Revival. Seymour spoke in tongues for the first time on April 9, 1906. Seymour's activities associated with the Azusa Street Revival launched American Pentecostalism, and Azusa Street became a "Pentecostal Mecca" where pilgrims from all over the globe would come and receive the Holy Spirit and His gifts of supernatural signs and wonders.

It is important to note that Agnes Ozman's "Chinese" was later proven to be gibberish and her so-called "spiritual scribble" was published in a magazine and identified as "random hieroglyphics" which was indecipherable and had nothing in common with Chinese.

### 2. The Charismatic Movement

Also known as Neo-Pentecostalism, it began in the mid-1950s largely through the efforts of the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International of Los Angeles, and the Assemblies of God minister David J. du Plessis, who promoted the Pentecostal experience to non-Pentecostal denominations. On August 3, 1960, Episcopal priest Dennis Bennett of St.

Marks Church in California, announced in his pulpit that he had been baptized by the Holy Spirit and then went on to speak in tongues. Bennett came under immediate criticism and resigned after the third of three services held that day. The matter, however, was so widely publicized that this event is often viewed as the founding of the Charismatic Movement, as it spread to every denomination and cut across all theological boundaries. The Charismatic movement is marked by less concern for the nature of the new birth and greater emphasis placed on Spirit baptism and tongues. Key organisations and figures associated with this movement include: Trinity Broadcasting Network established by Paul Crouch in 1973, The International Catholic Charismatic Conference of Rome established in 1975, Oral Roberts and his son Richard, Kenneth Hagin, Pat Robertson, Rex Humbard, Jimmy Swaggart, Kenneth Copeland, Jim Bakker, and Benny Hinn.

### 3. Third-Wave Theology

This is also known as the “Signs and Wonders” or the “Third Wave Movement”, the first wave being “Pentecostalism”, and the second being “The Charismatic Renewal.” This third group consists of largely mainline evangelicals who do not want to be identified with the first two groups and yet believed in miraculous gifts, tongues, and healing for today. They teach that the new birth and Spirit baptism occur at the same time and give great place to the miraculous gifts, viewing them as the long-buried truth that has once again come to light, generating widespread excitement. This movement was started by C. Peter Wagner of the Fuller Theological Seminary Missions Department. Also part of the third wave are John Wimber of the Vineyard Christian Fellowship in California along with Dallas Seminary Professor, Jack Deere. Leaders of the movement are concerned with healing and the Christian response to demonic activity. A subset of this group is the “open but cautious” position – an expression coined by Wayne Grudem, - of noted evangelical teachers, including Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Robert Saucy, John Piper, and Wayne Grudem himself. Charismatics are often openly critical of “third wavers”.

### 4. Cessationism

This is the view that the miraculous gifts ceased with, or very soon after, the ministry of the apostles to whom – and to whom only – they were given. It understands that the miraculous and non-miraculous gifts appear in the same lists in Scripture because they all came from the same source- God’s grace and the Spirit’s power- yet it recognises that different gifts are given by God for different purposes. This view is not concerned with the “experiences” of a Christian but with a careful, non-speculative study of the Scriptures. It minimizes the element of human experience by not allowing experience to influence decisions of biblical interpretation. This is the historic position of the Calvinistic Reformation, Jonathan Edwards, and numerous puritans.

## Definition and Purpose of Spiritual Gifts

It is at this point that we must understand what is meant by the Scriptures when it speaks of spiritual gifts.

*“A spiritual gift is the God-given capacity of every Christian to carry out his function in the body of Christ.”*

The purpose of the spiritual gifts is given in **1 Corinthians 12:7** *“To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”*

The “common good” refers to the building up of the believers in a local church.

As we have said before, the gift or gifts that have been imparted to you as a Christian, is not for selfish applications, but to edify and strengthen the body of Christ.

Additionally, the multiplicity of spiritual gifts does not denote greater spirituality in the possessor, but it does mean greater responsibility before the Lord.

At this point let me make a couple of quick comments before we look at the spiritual gifts as revealed in the Scriptures. Some of these I have already mentioned previously.

1. A spiritual gift is a supernatural ability given by God to the believer for the purpose of serving.
2. A spiritual gift is not the same as the gift of the Spirit.
3. Spiritual gifts are not the same as the fruit of the Spirit.
4. The Bible teaches that the offices of the Holy Spirit are different from the gifts of the Spirit. A person may possess a gift without holding the corresponding office E.G. not every Christian who has been given the gift of teaching should be ordained as a pastor/ teacher, but every pastor must have the gift of teaching.
5. Giftedness is NOT spirituality. The dispensing of the gifts is not on the basis of spirituality but on God's sovereign choice (1 Cor 12:11)
6. The spiritual gifts were not given to make us proud but to encourage dependence.
7. Nobody has all the spiritual gifts.
8. There is a clear distinction between spiritual gifts and natural talents.

## **Spiritual Gifts in the Bible**

The first thing we must understand is that every Christian is entrusted with at least one gift when they become a Christian.

**1 Peter 4:10-11** As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

In studying the Scriptures we find that there are four passages which list out the spiritual gifts. Let's look at these now.

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### **7 Listed Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:6-8)**

1. Prophecy
2. Service
3. Teaching
4. Exhortation
5. Contribution
6. Leading
7. Acts of Mercy

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### **9 Listed Spiritual Gifts (1 Corinthians 12:8-10)**

1. Utterance of Wisdom



2. Utterance of Knowledge
3. Faith
4. Healing
5. Working of Miracles
6. Prophecy
7. Discernment of spirits
8. Tongues
9. Interpretation of Tongues

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## **8 Listed Spiritual Gifts (1 Corinthians 12:28b)**

1. Apostles
2. Prophets
3. Teachers
4. Miracles
5. Gifts of healing
6. Helping
7. Administrating
8. Tongues

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## **4 Listed Spiritual Gifts/Offices (Ephesians 4:7-12)**

1. Apostles
2. Prophets
3. Evangelists
4. Pastor-teachers

When we account for double-ups in these lists, we come up with a total of 18 gifts.

Of these 18 gifts there are two clear categories: Sign Gifts and Permanent Gifts

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### **Sign Gifts:**

The Holy Spirit gave temporary sign gifts to authenticate the message of the apostles and prophets at the beginning of the church. These gifts were prevalent in the early church but ceased to be evident once the church became established. These gifts include:

1. Apostleship (Ephesians 4:11)
2. Prophecy (1 Corinthians 12:10; Romans 12:6)
3. Healing (1 Corinthians 12:9,28,30)
4. Miracles (1 Corinthians 12:10,28)

5. Tongues (1 Corinthians 12:10)
  6. Interpretation of Tongues (1 Corinthians 12:10)
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## **Permanent Gifts:**

These gifts were given to build up the church and continue to this day.

1. Ministering/Serving (Romans 12:7; 1 Corinthians 12:28)
2. Teaching (Romans 12:7; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11)
3. Exhortation (Romans 12:8; Proverbs 25:11)
4. Giving/Contributing (Romans 12:8)
5. Ruling/Administration/Governance (Romans 12:8)
6. Acts of Mercy (Romans 12:8)
7. Wisdom (1 Corinthians 12:8)
8. Knowledge (1 Corinthians 12:8)
9. Faith (1 Corinthians 12:9; Romans 12:3)
10. Discernment of spirits (1 Corinthians 12:10; 1 John 4:1)
11. Evangelist (Ephesians 4:11; 2 Timothy 4:5)<sup>1</sup>
12. Pastor-Teacher (Ephesians 4:11)

Next week we will commence a thorough study of each of these categories and the associated gifts. In the meantime ask the Lord to help you to understand what gifts he has given you so that you can function effectively in His church for the building of His Kingdom and edification of His saints.

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<sup>1</sup> The author has not reached a definite position on whether this is a permanent gift or not at the time of writing.

# Spiritual Gifts

(PART 3)

## Listing & Defining the Spiritual Gifts

There are three places in the Scripture where the spiritual gifts are listed: Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; and 1 Corinthians 12:28. In addition to these there are the “office gifts” (Ephesians 4:11) which refer to individuals and are not spiritual gifts per se.

Romans 12:6-8	1 Corinthians 12:4-11	1 Corinthians 12:28
Prophecy	Utterance of Wisdom	Miracles
Service	Utterance of Knowledge	Healing
Teaching	Faith	Helping
Exhortation	Healing	Administrating
Contribution	Working of Miracles	Tongues
Leadership	Prophecy	
Mercy	Distinguishing between spirits	
	Various kinds of Tongues	
	Interpretation of Tongues	

For a better understanding of how the spiritual gifts function, the gifts have been organised into three categories: Speaking Gifts, Serving Gifts and Sign Gifts. In the previous lesson, I grouped these into two categories to show the difference between gifts that were temporary and those that were permanent. These categories are not defined in Scripture and it is important to remember that any classification system of the gifts is man-made.

Speaking Gifts	Serving Gifts	Sign Gifts
Prophecy	Service	Miracles
Teaching	Exhortation	Healing
Utterance of Wisdom	Contribution	Tongues
Utterance of Knowledge	Leadership/Administrating	Interpretation of Tongues
	Mercy	
	Distinguishing between spirits	
	Faith	
	Helping	

**Prophecy:** To prophesy is to preach or proclaim divine truth. Although this gift is often referred to as “foretelling the future”, it is more accurately understood as “telling-forth” or declaring truth. One who is bestowed this gift will be concerned with publicly proclaiming the gospel and the Word of God.

**Service:** Sometimes this gift is referred to as “ministering” and speaks of the broad application of practical help to those in need. The Greek word *diakonian* is where we derive the English word “deacon”. The individual who has been given this gift will demonstrate a desire help people in practical ways.

**Teaching:** This gift enables the believer to study, analyse, and communicate God’s Word effectively to the church. The gifted teacher is one who has the unique ability to clearly instruct others in the Word and help them understand what it means.

**Exhortation:** Sometimes called “the gift of encouragement”, Exhortation is the God-given ability to come alongside another believer to motivate, build up, and encourage them. This is an essential gift for Christian counselling.

**Contribution:** This gift is associated with generosity. The Christian who possesses this gift will joyfully share what they have with others, whether it is financial, material, or the giving of time and attention.

**Leadership:** The word literally means “guide” and refers to one who is gifted to rule or oversee others. This is an essential gift of those called to lead the church as pastors, elders, missionaries and other ministry leaders.

**Mercy:** This is the ability to show sincere compassion to those who are in distress, and lessen their suffering by listening, engaging, and showing loving kindness.

**Utterance of Wisdom:** This gift is the ability to apply wisdom to situations in life which require spiritual discernment. This wisdom finds its source in the Word of God.

**Utterance of Knowledge:** This refers to a deep understanding of the facts of Scripture. Some call it “biblical scholarship”, such as would be found in a Bible College Lecturer. This gift brings with it the ability to understand and communicate the deep things of God.

**Faith:** Although faith is present in all believers, the gift of faith is a special endowment to exercise absolute dependence upon God and have great power in prayer. Some refer to this as the “Gift of Prayer” because it is primarily expressed towards God through prayer.

**Healing:** This gift belonged to some in the first century church and authenticated the message of the gospel. God still heals today, but the gift of healing the sick and raising the dead is no longer in operation.

**Miracles:** Similar to healing, the gift of miracles was another temporary sign gift which involved performing supernatural events, signs and wonders, and confirmed the testimony of the apostles.

**Distinguishing between spirits:** This gift is sometimes called “Discernment” and refers to the ability to distinguish between the things which are from the Spirit of God and those which are not. This is a protective gift given to ensure that the church is not led astray to erroneous doctrines.

**Speaking in Tongues:** This was the divine ability to speak in languages previously unknown to the speaker. The purpose of this gift was to authenticate the message of the gospel, and to enable the believer to communicate the truth unhindered by language barriers. This is not a “personal prayer language” as many believe.

**Interpretation of Tongues:** A person with the gift of interpretation could understand what a tongues-speaker was communicating even though they did not know the language. The interpreter would then communicate what was being said so that everybody could understand the message being proclaimed.

**Helping:** Closely related to the gift of mercy, the gift of helping is the ability to render aid or assistance to those in the church who are in time of need. Someone with the gift of helping will bear another person's burdens and provide physical and spiritual assistance.

## **The Blending of Spiritual Gifts**

Some Christians fill out surveys to find out what their spiritual gifts are. Others are unconcerned about discovering God's will in this matter. What should be our response?

Peter says, *"As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace" (1 Peter 4:10)*. God has equipped us with a spiritual gift and it is our responsibility to discover it, and then exercise it for God's glory and the benefit of the church body.

Some Bible teachers believe that Christians are distributed different gifts which can easily be defined. Others believe that God bestows one gift to every believer which is a "blending" of the various gifts making each of us entirely unique. Whatever the case, God wants us to function in His church effectively, and that means that every believer must know their gifting and place in the body

# HERESY THAT HAS INVADED THE CHURCH

## PENTECOSTALISM: UNDERSTANDING HISTORICAL CONTEXT & BACKGROUND

### Introduction:

One of the perils confronting the 21st Century Church is the lack of discernment with regards to what is taught from behind church pulpits (if they still have them). Christians have assumed that because a preacher uses the Bible, he or she must be dividing its truths correctly. Nothing could be further from the truth! The Bible can be made to say anything if it is stripped of its context, word meanings, and the laws of interpretation.

We have already discussed the “pragmatic approach” to church today which says, *if it is popular, it must be right*. Many advocates of the Pentecostal Movement cite its wide acceptance as proof of its divine origin.

In our quest for truth, it is important that we consider the historical context and background of Pentecostalism before assuming it is of God. How a movement begins is as important as what it teaches. In other words, we must examine the fruit and the root.

A true revival performed by God stands up to investigation and examination. God is not afraid of our pursuit for verification, in fact He delights to see His people carefully weigh their experiences, and the teaching received against His inspired Word.

God is never in competition with Himself. The Holy Spirit does not perform a work that is false or in contradiction to the Scripture which He inspired. If the unity of the trinity is ever under attack, it is most certainly not a work of God!

With these introductory thoughts in mind, let's spend some time considering: **Pentecostalism: Understanding Its Historical Context & Background.**

### The Importance of Tracing the Source

#### Acts 8:4-24

##### General Observations:

1. The evangelist/preacher preaches the Word and the gospel of Jesus Christ (8:4-5,12).
2. The message is accompanied by signs, miracles, healings, etc. (8:6-7).
3. True joy is the result of belief (8:7).
4. The Samaritans were privy to signs and wonders in the past (8:9).
5. Simon told people he was someone “great” (8:9).
6. All the people - ages, social status, gender etc. believed in him (8:10).
7. Such was his power and persuasion that the people believed he was God incarnate (*This man is the power of God that is called “Great” 8:9-10*). The best Greek manuscripts suggest that Simon assumed the role of Messiah before the people, and they believed him!
8. Philip's message resulted in faith, and obedience (8:12).
9. The power of Philip's message resulted in Simon the magician's (sorcerer) salvation (8:13). The message of the gospel has greater power than the that which resides with the enemy!
10. The apostles repudiated the notion that the Holy Spirit could be purchased with money (8:19). Yet is this not what we see in many places today?
11. An individual who is self-serving with regards to the Holy Spirit has a “*heart that is not right with God*” (8:21).

What was the difference between the Philip and Simon?

It was not the signs and wonders, it was the life-changing message, the preaching of the Word, and obedience to the Lord on the part of those who believed. Wherever true signs and wonders are seen in the Scripture, there is a clear, accurate, and biblical exposition of the gospel!

# Tracing the History of Pentecostalism

One can hardly refer to the modern Pentecostal movement without mentioning Charles F. Parham (1873-1929). Referred to as the “Father of Pentecostalism”, Parham established the Bethel Healing Home (1898), and the Bethel Bible College (1900). During a twelve-week trip to Chicago, Cleveland, and New York, Parham heard much about the ‘Latter Rain’ outpouring of the Holy Spirit, reinforcing his conviction that Christ’s premillennial return would occur after an unprecedented world-wide revival. Isolated reports of the outbreak of tongues amongst missionaries helped him begin the formulation of his doctrine of the Holy Spirit, spiritual gifts and end time revival. Before leaving for a 3-day-trip to Kansas City, the students of his college were given the task of researching what biblical evidence could be found on the baptism of the Holy Spirit. About forty students unanimously agreed that speaking in tongues was the confirmation of having been baptised with the Holy Spirit. He returned on the morning preceding the watch night service of December 31, 1900. Parham was astonished when the students reported their findings that, while there were different things that occurred when the Pentecostal blessing fell, the indisputable proof on each occasion was that they spoke in other tongues.

About seventy-five people gathered with the forty students for the watch night service and there was an “intense power of the Lord present.” It was here that a student, Agnes Ozman, (later LaBerge) asked that hands might be laid upon her to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. She believed she was called to the mission field and wanted to be equipped accordingly. At first Parham refused, as he himself never had the experience. Nevertheless, she persisted and Parham laid his hands upon her head.<sup>2</sup>

Parham writes, “I had scarcely repeated three dozen sentences when a glory fell upon her, a halo seemed to surround her head and face, and she began speaking in the Chinese language, and was unable to speak English for three days. When she tried to write in English... she wrote in Chinese, copies of which we still have in newspapers printed at that time”.<sup>3</sup>

This event sparked what is called the “Pentecostal Revival” and ushered in a new doctrine teaching that baptism in the Holy Spirit was evidenced by speaking in tongues.

In 1905, Parham established the Houston Bible School in Houston, Texas and also held meetings in a home at 214 North Bonnie Brae Street. On April 9, 1906, seven people are said to have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit which resulted in speaking in tongues. Parham’s meetings were marked by shouts of praise, speaking in tongues, trances and physical shaking. One of Parham’s students, William J. Seymour (1870-1922), a black evangelist, established the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles, California in 1906. This location is considered the “birthplace of Pentecostalism”. Seymour’s meetings were held three times a day, seven days a week, for three years. Some of the meetings were 10 hours in length. The services were characterized by dancing, falling over, speaking in tongues, hysteria, animal noises, “holy laughter” and “spiritual muteness” (people trying to speak but unable to do so).

The Azusa Street Mission Organ wrote, “The power of God fell and every one was caught up in the Spirit and saw visions of God. Several had a vision of the Saviour. He held a book in His hand. They saw the nail prints and the blood trickling down while He wrote their names in the book with His fingers with the blood that ran from His pierced hand.”<sup>4</sup>

The Los Angeles Times wrote, “Meetings are held in a tumble-down shack on Azusa Street, and the devotees of the weird doctrine practice the most fanatical rites, preach the wildest theories and work themselves into a state of mad excitement in their peculiar zeal. African Americans and a sprinkling of whites compose the congregation, and night is made hideous in the neighborhood by

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<sup>2</sup> Tony Cauchi, <http://www.revival-library.org/index.php/pensketches-menu/american-pentecostal-pioneers/charles-parham>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Arno C. Gaebelein, *The So-Called Gift of Tongues, Our Hope*, XIV (July 1907), 15

the howling's of the worshippers, who spend hours swaying forth and back in a nerve racking attitude of prayer and supplication. They claim to have the 'gift of tongues' and be able to understand the babel."<sup>5</sup>

By 1906 there were 8-10,000 members of the Pentecostal churches Parham had established. Parham was a strong supporter of British-Israelism or Anglo-Israelism, which taught that Great Britain was the geographical home of the lost tribes of Israel. At some point he wrote a pamphlet titled "*Queen Victoria: Heir to King David's Royal Throne*." This teaching supported Parham's segregationist views of the spiritual superiority of white races and their special call by God to fulfil His plan for the world. In 1907 Parham was arrested for sexual misconduct, but all charges were dropped due to a lack of witnesses. Opponents believed he was guilty and supporters believed he had been set up. There was also growing doctrinal controversy in the Pentecostal movement which led to a myriad of splits.<sup>6</sup>

The last 20 years of Parham's life were lived in Baxter Springs, Kansas. He moved there in 1909. In 1910 Parham wrote "*A Voice Of One Crying in the Wilderness*" and "*The Everlasting Gospel*" in 1911. Surprisingly, Parham became a member of the local Freemason Lodge, something most holiness groups were adamantly opposed to. He continued to preach on Pentecostalism and work as an evangelist and faith healer. Parham constantly traveled to Pentecostal churches and he collapsed during a visit to Temple, Texas. He died on January 29, 1929, at the age of 56. His family, fearing that someone would damage his grave, buried him with a small stone marker that did not even include his name. Years later a memorial was put up by friends. In 1930 Parham's wife wrote a biography titled "*The Life of Charles F. Parham: Founder of the Apostolic Faith Movement*" and also later published "*Sermons of the Late Charles F. Parham*."<sup>7</sup>

Parham and Seymour's efforts ignited a "new doctrine of Christianity" which continued to spread across the globe so that by 1950 there were an estimated 50,000,000 Pentecostals. By the 1960s Pentecostalism had entered every major denominational group and become an ecumenical force to be reckoned with. Even the Roman Catholic Church were beginning to have Pentecostal-type experiences, and in 1974 over 30,000 people attended the Annual Charismatic Catholic Conference held at Notre Dame.

The "second wave" or "new charismatic movement" began in 1960 at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Van Nuys, California, where there was a sudden outburst of tongue speaking. This event was so significant that it attracted both the Time and Newsweek coverage. After this encounter, the movement spread like wildfire in the Episcopal Church, which was followed closely by the Lutherans and Presbyterians as well.

In the Summer of 1977 the Kansas City Charismatic Conference was held, and some 50,000 people were in attendance. The three wings of the Pentecostal Movement were present: (1) Old Pentecostals ("classical Pentecostals"); (2) Protestant Charismatics; and (3) Catholic Charismatics. This was the largest gathering of ecumenical Pentecostal Christians in modern history.

The term "third wave" was coined by C. Peter Wagner in 1983, and this movement is also referred to as "The Signs and Wonders Movement" and "The Vineyard Movement". Third Wavers stress the role of signs, wonders, and supernatural works as an essential element to evangelism.

The next cog in the Pentecostal wheel is the "Word of Faith Movement" (WoF) which finds its root in the teachings of Evangelist E. W. Kenyon (1867-1948). He studied the metaphysical New Thought teachings of Phineas Quimby, and began the process of mixing orthodox Christianity with mysticism. Along came Kenneth Hagin Sr. who really put flesh on the "Word of Faith Movement."

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<sup>5</sup> Jack W. Hayford; David S. Moore (2006). *The Charismatic Century: The Enduring Impact of the Azusa Street Revival* (August 2006 ed.)

<sup>6</sup> Healing and Revival Press, <https://www.healingandrevival.com/BioCFParham.htm>

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.



He believed that God's will is for Christians to always be in good health, financially successful, and happy. At the heart of this movement is the belief in the "force of faith" which teaches that words can be used to manipulate an outcome, and actually create the desired and God-promised type of life. This is where the "name-it-and-claim-it" doctrine is most clearly manifested. The most prominent figures in this movement include: Kenneth Hagin, Benny Hinn, Kenneth Copeland, David Yonggi Cho, Paul and Jan Couch, Fred Price, Joel Osteen, Creflo Dollar, Paula White, and Rodney Howarde-Brown.

The next major event on the Pentecostal calendar took place in Toronto Airport Vineyard Church on January 20, 1994. A visiting pastor, Randy Clark, had shared his testimony with the assembly, and explained how he would often get "drunk in the Spirit" resulting in uncontrollable laughter. In response to this testimony, the congregation erupted in pandemonium with people laughing, growling, dancing, shaking, barking like dogs, and even being stuck in positions of paralysis.<sup>8</sup> The pastor of the church, John Arnott, referred to it as a "big Holy Spirit party". In that first year, over 55,000 churches around the world "caught the blessing" and similar experiences were had. Well known proponents of this teaching include: Bill Johnston (Senior Pastor, Bethel Church Redding, California), Heidi & Roland Baker (Missionaries to Mozambique, Africa), and Che Ahn (Senior Pastor, Harvest Rock Church Pasadena, California).

Perhaps the most explosive, and most concerning movement, is the "New Apostolic Reformation" initiated by the late, self-appointed "Presiding Apostle", C. Peter Wagner. The New Apostolic Reformation (NAR) is a dominionist movement which teaches that God is restoring the "lost offices" of church governance, and in particular, the gifts of apostle and prophet. According to Wagner, "The New Apostolic Reformation is the most radical way of doing church since the Protestant Reformation."<sup>9</sup>

The NAR is a loosely organized movement claiming that their prophets and apostles alone have the authority and power to execute God's purposes on earth. They believe they are laying up the foundation for a global church, which will be governed by them.<sup>10</sup> The NAR Movement is marked by an emphasis on special revelation through dreams, visions, and even verbal utterances made by God to their leaders. They rely heavily upon the reported experiences of their apostles who recount visits with Jesus, outer-body experiences in both heaven and hell, angelic conversations, and other extra-biblical phenomena. The NAR are known by many different titles which include: Dominionism, Third Wave, Latter Rain, Kingdom Now, Joel's Army, Manifest Sons of God, Charismatic Renewal, and Charismania.

In the New Apostolic Reformation, apostles are seen as the highest of all spiritual leaders, being specially empowered by God. True maturity and unity, per the New Apostolic Reformation, is only found in those who submit to the leadership of their apostles. According to this teaching, as the church unifies behind the apostles, these leaders will develop greater and greater supernatural powers. Eventually, this will include the ability to perform mass healings and suspend the laws of physics. These signs are meant to encourage a massive wave of converts to Christianity. These apostles are also destined to be recipients of a great wealth transfer (in the end times), which will enable the church to establish God's kingdom on earth.<sup>11</sup>

In this new age of apostles, several apostolic networks have been established. C. Peter Wagner's is called the "International Coalition of Apostles" (ICA).<sup>12</sup> The ICA website offers some insight into the teaching and positions held by this organization, as well as a global map which lists the apostles located in any given area in the world. The site also includes the "Annual Membership

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<sup>8</sup> What is the Toronto Blessing? <http://www.gotquestions.org/Toronto-blessing.html>

<sup>9</sup> Comment made by C. Peter Wagner. See: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PHWyOz\\_SZCk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PHWyOz_SZCk)

<sup>10</sup> See: <https://bereanresearch.org/dominionism-nar/>

<sup>11</sup> Taken from: <https://www.gotquestions.org/New-Apostolic-Reformation.html>

<sup>12</sup> See: <https://www.icaleaders.com>

Rates” for those authorized to be apostles.<sup>13</sup> A special discount is applied to married couples who are both identified as being apostles (a discount of \$200).

Leading advocates of the NAR movement include: C. Peter Wagner, Chuck Pierce, Paul Cain, Cindy Jacobs, Mike Bickle (International House of Prayer: IHOP), Rick Joyner, Bill Johnson (Bethel Church, Redding CA), and Brian and Bobbie Houston (Hillsong Church).

In 2000 there were an estimated 560 million Pentecostals in the world. A more recent estimate suggests there are as many as 800 million Pentecostals in the world today.

Today (2018), the Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements continue to gain momentum, and any attempt to challenge its doctrinal/biblical position is met with harsh criticism by its advocates. Instead of responding like the Bereans, followers of these movements appeal to personal experiences as the proof of their authenticity, and quickly define those in opposition as “limiters of the Holy Spirit’s power”, and “suppressors of God’s glory”.

## Principles for Discernment:

And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ. Philippians 1:9-10

Paul’s prayer for the church at Philippi was that their love may abound more and more, but also that it would be accompanied by knowledge and discernment.

We have a lot of people in church today who are concerned about the “love aspect” of Christianity, but very few who are concerned about growing in knowledge and discernment. True love will grow, not just in relationship to deeds and activities, but also in the ability to know what is right and wrong.

The word “discernment” (“Judgment” in KJV) is αἴσθησις (aisthēsis) and refers to “*sensitive moral perception*.”<sup>14</sup> Albert Barnes writes, “*The word here [discernment] means, the power of discerning; and the meaning is, that he wished that their love should be exercised with proper discrimination.*”<sup>15</sup>

The author of Hebrews wrote, “But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil” (Hebrews 5:14).

John MacArthur preached a sermon in November 2002. In his introduction he said, “*The biggest problem in the church today is the absence of discernment. It’s a lack of discernment. It’s the biggest problem with Christian people, they make bad choices. They accept the wrong thing. They accept the wrong theology. They are prone to the wrong teaching. They’re unwise in who they follow, what they listen to and what they read.*”<sup>16</sup>

### PRINCIPLES FOR DISCERNMENT:<sup>17</sup>

1. Remember there are two kingdoms in the world (John 18:36; 2 Corinthians 4:4).
2. Consult the Scriptures on all spiritual matters (2 Timothy 3:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:21).
3. Consider the source, origin, background, and context (Matthew 7:15-23).
4. All experiences must be validated by the Scriptures (2 Peter 2-3).
5. Ask the Lord for wisdom (James 1:5-6).

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<sup>13</sup> See: <https://www.icaleaders.com/membership/rates>

<sup>14</sup> Marvin R. Vincent, D.D, Vincent’s Word Studies, Covenant Parsonage, New York, 1886. E-Sword Version 5.1

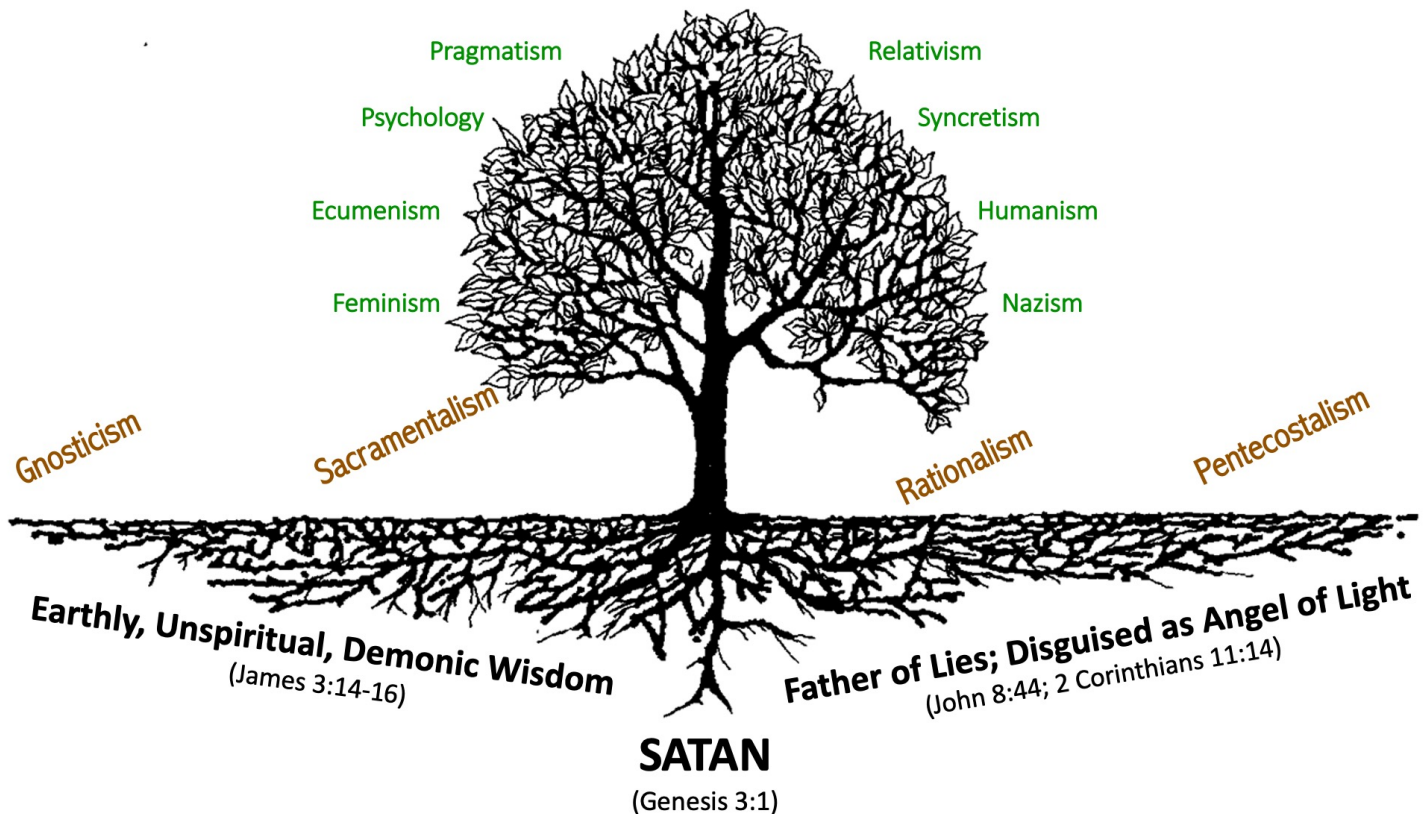
<sup>15</sup> Albert Barnes, Albert Barnes’ Notes on the Bible, Published in 1847-85; public domain. E-Sword Version 5.1

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/TMC209/principles-for-discernment-part-1>

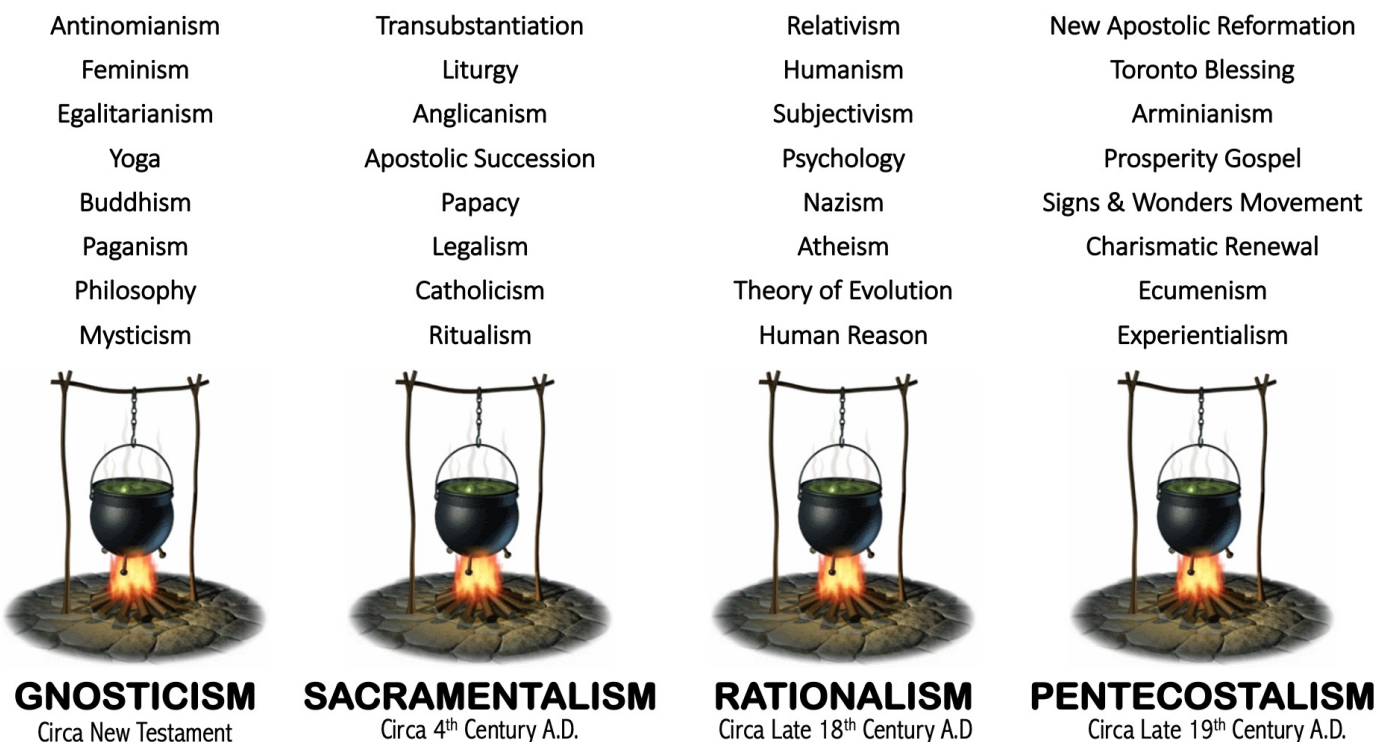
<sup>17</sup> This is by no means an exhaustive list. These are some over-arching principles compiled by Pastor Daniel Kriss for Mt. Cathedral Community Baptist Church.

6. Ensure that you are walking in the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18; Galatians 5:24-25).
7. Think, meditate, take time to ponder the matter (Proverbs 15:16).
8. Seek help and guidance from mature believers who have a proven track record (Hebrews 5:14; Colossians 2:6-7; Romans 15:14)

# DIAGRAMS



## FOUR CALDRONS IN THE DEVIL'S KITCHEN



# UNDERSTANDING GNOSTICISM & ITS OFFSPRING

Antinomianism	The belief that there is no moral law that God expects Christians to obey in this dispensation of grace.
Feminism	The movement advocating equality of women with men in all areas: social, political, familial, ecclesiastical, etc.
Egalitarianism	The belief that men and women have no differences, disqualifying either one from holding offices within the church.
Yoga	A Hindu practice of physical, mental and spiritual discipline which originated in India.
Buddhism	A religion concerned with enlightenment and derived from the philosophies and teachings of Siddhartha Gautama.
Paganism	A term used to describe a broad range of beliefs such as: polytheism, pantheism, nature worship, etc.
Philosophy	The study of seeking knowledge and wisdom in the understanding of nature, the universe, ethics, purpose, etc.
Mysticism	The practice of religious ecstasies. These may include: ethics, rites, myths, legends, magic, and enlightenment.



**GNOSTICISM**  
Circa New Testament

Gnosticism was present in the New Testament. From the Greek word “gnosis” meaning knowledge. A gnostic believed in acquiring special, mystical knowledge as the means of salvation. Gnosticism also declared that man is essentially a good soul that is trapped in an evil, material body. Gnostic thinking claims that deeper truth can be found apart from God.

# UNDERSTANDING SACRAMENTALISM & ITS OFFSPRING

Transubstantiation	The belief that the elements of communion mystically transform into the actual body and blood of Christ.
Liturgy	Generally used in the negative. Refers to a system of practices for public worship. A strict order of events.
Anglicanism	Also called the Church of England. A breakaway group from Roman Catholicism but holding similar views.
Apostolic Succession	The belief that the spiritual authority of the apostles is passed through successive popes and bishops.
Papacy	The office held by the pope as the head of the Roman Catholic Church who is also referred to as the “Holy Father”.
Legalism	The excessive and improper use of the law as a means of attaining or maintaining salvation.
Catholicism	The faith and practices of the Roman Catholic Church who operate under the headship of the Bishop of Rome.
Ritualism	The belief that performing “religious tasks” or duties will procure or maintain one’s salvation.



**SACRAMENTALISM**  
Circa 4<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.

Sacramentalism largely began with Constantine in the 4<sup>th</sup> century when he made “Christianity” the religion of the whole empire. His reign gave birth to the “constitutional church” which replaced the personal decision to trust Jesus as Saviour with external ritualism, ceremonies, and rites. This led to the dangerous misconception that an individual needed to connect to the church and not Christ.



# UNDERSTANDING RATIONALISM & ITS OFFSPRING

Relativism	The belief that truth is relative and that there are no absolutes. Ethics are dependent on upbringing and worldview.
Humanism	The philosophical system of thought that focuses on human value, thoughts and actions.
Subjectivism	The philosophical position that all knowledge and truths are subject to individual interpretation and experience.
Psychology	The scientific study of the human mind, behaviours, purpose, and development.
Nazism	Sometimes called "National Socialism" and is a set of political beliefs associated with the Nazi Party of Germany.
Atheism	Disbelief or lack of belief in the existence of God or gods.
Theory of Evolution	The theory that new species arise and are perpetuated by natural selection. Derived largely from Charles Darwin.
Human Reason	The practice of applying human, secular logic to all circumstances and denying the supernatural.



**RATIONALISM**  
Circa Late 18<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.

Rationalism came shortly after the Protestant Reformation. This powerful ideology largely arose from Thomas Paine's book, *The Age of Reason* (1794). This 3-part book advocated reason in the place of God's divine revelation. It rejected the accounts of miracles in the Bible, and taught that the Scriptures are an ordinary piece of literature. Denying the trinity, incarnation etc. on the basis that that are irrational.

# UNDERSTANDING PENTECOSTALISM & ITS OFFSPRING

New Apostolic Reformation	The belief that God is restoring the "lost offices" of church governance. Largely the work of C. Peter Wagner.
Toronto Blessing	An "outpouring" of the Holy Spirit in Toronto in 1994 resulting in people getting "drunk in the Spirit".
Arminianism	The over-emphasis of man's responsibility in salvation to choose God out of their own "free-will".
Prosperity Gospel	The movement that teaches the divine right of all Christians to prosper in health and wealth through faith.
Signs & Wonders Movement	Sometimes called "The Third Wave Movement". It is the belief that the gospel will be accompanied by signs/wonders.
Charismatic Renewal	The Catholic Charismatic Renewal is a spiritual movement that incorporates Catholicism and the Charismatic Beliefs.
Ecumenism	The principle or aim of promoting unity among the world's "Christian Churches" regardless of doctrinal differences.
Experientialism	The movement that replaced God's revealed Word with feelings, external revelations, visions, and prophecies.



**PENTECOSTALISM**  
Circa Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.

Pentecostalism or Classical Pentecostalism is a movement within Christianity that places special emphasis on a direct personal experience with God through the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This event is believed to occur some time after conversion. Pentecostalism has been called the "Second Pentecost" and claims to recover and practice the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit mentioned in Acts.