

The Bride of Christ and the Spiritual Gifts (I Corinthians 12-13; Ephesians 4:1-16)

In His death and resurrection, YAHSHUA bestowed spiritual gifts on those who would receive Him as their Lord and Savior for the perfecting of the saints in their ministering together, and the building up of YAHSHUA'S body – His church (Ephesians 4:12). There are two kinds of church: the universal church, which is the invisible church, made up of the true believers of Messiah YAHSHUA, and the visible church which is made up of church goers, but not true believers in Messiah YAHSHUA.

The purpose of YAHWEH in His plan to unite Jews and Gentiles is visible in the new covenant of blood- the blood of YASHUA, which unites them as one body – the body of Christ. Salvation was to be preached to the entire world by the Jews in the command of YAHSHUA, Go then and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe everything that I have commanded you and behold, I am with you all the days, to the [very] close and consummation of the age (Matt. 28:19-20). The spiritual gifts given to all believers were for the purpose of equipping the them for the work of building each other through their ministering of love, compassion, faith and hope in oneness of the HOLY SPIRIT, as one body serving YAHSHUA, the One and only sovereign Lord of all, until perfect unity will be obtained in faith and in the knowledge of YAHWEH (Ephesians 4).

It seems impossible to unite all denominations of the Christian faith, when they all differ in key points of doctrine; believers are separated by the veil of misinterpretation of Scriptures in some cases, blinded to the knowledge of Scriptures, because of traditions of Christmas, Easter, purgatory, baptism, etc. adopted by the churches centuries ago. But the fact is that the true believer- the invisible church, even though separated by denominations, is of the same mind in Christ. YAHSHUA gave us first the gift of salvation and equipped His Bride with strength of ability to perform the task assigned to each of us under the leadership of His Spirit, although distinctive in varieties of operations, the gifts are the power of YAHWEH in each of us for the building up of every believer unto understanding, and into the knowledge of Him.

The gifts, exercised by every believer who walks in obedience, are manifestations of the presence of the HOLY SPIRIT and His power. The HOLY SPIRIT is the one who inspires, energizes and illuminates His truth and His will to the believer. No believer is left without spiritual gifts no matter how illiterate the person is; the truth of the matter is that the spiritual gifts have nothing to do with earthly knowledge or education. We see this in the lives of the Prophets of the Old Testament as well as in the lives of YAHSHUA'S disciples. Several were fishermen; they had never gone to a seminary, or other schools; but they had three years of learning from the greatest Teacher that ever walked this earth- YAHSHUA. And today we also have His teachings available to us; we are energized by the power of His HOLY SPIRIT, and not by the knowledge acquired from the influence of school. He is the one who apportions to each of us of His gifts as He chooses. Just as a body has many parts, although one body, so also the Bride of Christ is one body with many parts to effectuate His purpose or will (I Corinthians 12).

It is important that each of us seek the gifts available to us to use them in our service to our Lord YAHSHUA MESSIAH. Not every one of us will have the outstanding visible gifts; but all gifts are of importance of function in the body of Christ. Many invisible gifts are the foundation, the strength of the body of Christ; When we envy the strength of someone's gift in the performance of it, we are burying the gifts we were given and the consequence will be experienced when face to face with our Lord at the final day; we will be considered lazy, idle and good-for-nothing servant with no rewards. Know that all parts of the body weak or strong, are necessary for the proper function of the body, as YAHWEH has so adjusted the whole body, giving the greater honor and richer endowment to the inferior parts, so that there should be no division or discord or lack of adaptation [of the parts of the body to each other], but the members all alike should have a mutual interest in and care for one another, if one member suffers, all the parts [share] the suffering; if one member is honored, all the members [share in] the enjoyment of it (I Corinthians 12:24-26).

Therefore collectively, we are the body of YAHSHUA; individually we are members of His body with one purpose in mind, that of building each other up in love, with compassion in unselfishness of spirit. The spiritual gifts must be exercised with love; otherwise they will not be counted for eternity when we all will appear before the judgment seat of Christ, to be repaid for what we have done in the body, whether good or bad (II Corinthians 5 10b). If anyone's work that he has built survives, he will receive a reward; if anyone's work is burned up, it will be lost, but he will be saved; yet it will be like an escape through fire (I Corinthians 3:14-15). Even the powerful gifts of faith that Remove Mountains, when exercised without love, is considered as nothing; prophecy which is the interpretation of the divine purpose, knowledge and understanding; and self-sacrifice, all these done without love nothing will be gained in the life to come, because love bears all things; believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things; and **love never ends**. The endlessness of love is eternity planted in all gifts; so prophecy, languages, knowledge apart from love will all come to an end, for they are partial; we know only in part; but love is perfect, complete and eternal and not partial; it will annul all that is in part and partial. For now we do see as in a mirror but then face to face; we do have knowledge in part, but then we will know fully (I Corinthians 13:12). Love completes all other gifts, because it is the greatest gift of all. Love must reside in all spiritual gifts to be effective in performance, endurance, forbearance, in hope and in faith. Love is YAHWEH in each of us compelling the believer to do the work depending on Him, for apart from Him- Love, nothing we do will remain; apart from Him we can do absolutely nothing! His love in us is the life of our faith, the blood flowing through, and giving life to all parts of the body. The importance of love is also that it is the root of all the gifts; it nurtures, sustains and feeds them.

Love is the true Vine from where we receive spiritual life to bear fruit through the spiritual gifts; YAHSHUA said that when we produce much fruit, His Father will be honored and glorified; this is the proof of a true believer! Alive in Him we are pruned and cleansed to perform the gifts that will bear fruit for His kingdom. The work of pruning is necessary for our sanctification and our remaining in Him.

And so faith, hope, love abide; [**faith**-conviction and belief respecting man's relation to God and divine things; **hope**- joyful and confident expectation of eternal salvation; **love**- true affection for God and man, growing out of God's love for and in us], but the greatest of all these is LOVE (I Corinthians 13:13).