

Daniel.07. Chapter 4

This morning, we continue in the series on the Book of Daniel, briefly looking at chapter 4, and then transitioning to the subject of spiritual gifts

- This is because this weekend the church is focusing on spiritual gifts, and just as a number are at the church retreat and focusing spiritual gifts, so we will as well

Daniel chapter 4 gives the account of a dream of King Nebuchadnezzar of a great tree, which only Daniel can interpret, about (a) God's judgment upon him for his pride, (b) his humiliating fall from his kingdom rule for a period of 7 years because of a form of insanity, (c) his restoration to his kingdom rule after his sanity is restored, so that (d) he understands and declares to the whole Babylonian Empire that Heaven rules the kingdoms of "men"

- It is significant that the account in this chapter was not written by Daniel but is the written testimony of King Nebuchadnezzar himself, and Daniel included it in his book

Outline of Chapter

4:1-2 - Nebuchadnezzar's Greeting in the Document Giving Glory to the Most High God

4:3-7 - The King has a Dream and Summons the Wise Men Who Can't Interpret It

4:8-18 - Daniel is Summoned, and the King Tells Him the Details of the Dream

4:19-28 - Daniel Interprets the Dream and Counsels the King to Repent

4:29-33 - After 12 Months, the Dream is Fulfilled

4:34-37 - After 7 years, the King is Restored and Gives Glory to the Most High God

There are a number of things to observe from this chapter, among them being

(1) The most important thing is the revelation of the sovereignty of God

- At this time, Nebuchadnezzar was the most powerful man in the world, and God chose to act in righteous judgment against his pride so that he would be completely humiliated, fall from his powerful kingdom rule, and then God would graciously restore his mind and rule

- The purpose of this was "*to the end that the living may know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will and sets over it the lowliest of men*" (Dan.4:17)

- Because of this, Nebuchadnezzar writes this testimony, and in it he makes 2 of the most important declarations in all of Scripture

- **Daniel 4:2-3** = *It has seemed good to me to show the signs and wonders that the Most High God has done for me. ³ How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion endures from generation to generation.*

- **Daniel 4:34-35** = *I blessed the Most High, and praised and honored him who lives forever, for his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation; ³⁵ all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, "What have you done?"*

(2) The Most High God chooses who will be the human rulers on earth

- **Daniel 4:17** = *the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will and sets over it the lowliest of men."*

- **Romans 13:1** = *There is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God*

(3) God works through angelic beings

- This is revealed in the activity of the angelic beings called “*watchers*” (Dan. 4:13, 17, 23)

(4) God works through people according to the spiritual gifts He has given to them

- **Daniel 1:17** states that Daniel was given the spiritual gift “*to understand visions and dreams*”
 - This gift from God the Holy Spirit was first manifested in chapter 2 with Daniel being given both the revelation and interpretation of the king’s dream of the “*image*” and “*stone*”
 - It was because Nebuchadnezzar recognized that this spiritual gift was from “*the spirit of the holy gods is in you [Daniel] and that no mystery is too difficult for you*” (Dan. 4:9) that he summoned Daniel to interpret his dream recorded in chapter 4, which Daniel does

This brings us to the vital and critically important subject of spiritual gifts

The sad reality is that too many Christians know little about (a) spiritual gifts, (b) their purpose in the Church, which is the Body of Christ, and (c) how they manifest and function

- 1 Corinthians 12:1 shows this has been a problem for many, if not most churches

- **1 Corinthians 12:1** = *Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed.*

- The Greek word translated “*uninformed*” is “*agnoeo*” (ἀγνοέω), from which we get our English word “*agnostic*,” that means “*not knowing*,” thus without knowledge or ignorant of

➔ **Because of ignorance of spiritual gifts by individual Christians, and churches as a whole, churches predominating function more as a human, “institutional corporation” rather than a living, dynamic, Spirit-filled “organism” as the “Body of Christ”**

However, the Scriptures reveal that spiritual gifts in Christians are essential for the proper functioning, working, and ministry of a church as the living, Spirit-filled Body of Christ

- **Romans 12:4–6** = *For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. ⁶ Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them*

➔ **What is so significant about the context of this word is that it comes immediately after Romans 12:1-2** = *I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*

➔ **The very first application of these words is not that we be “transformed” in our moral character but that each and every Christian is to “worship” God by functioning according to their spiritual gift(s) so that the church can actually be living as the Body of Christ**

This practically means:

(1) Every Christian must “present” him/herself as a “living sacrifice” in “acceptable” “worship” of God to do “the will of God” by “working properly” according to their spiritual gift(s) so that the “body” can “grow” and build itself up”

(2) For this to be taking place, every Christian must know their spiritual gift(s)

(3) If a “part” is either (a) simply not “working” or (b) not functioning “properly,” the church is “hindered” and “handicapped,” or worse, “diseased,” “dying,” or “dead”

This has been the tragic reality of Christians and churches throughout the centuries

- **2 Timothy 3:5** warns that the trajectory of a church and Christians can be to have a “*form of godliness but deny the power,*” and Church history demonstrates this
- The warning is that there can be an “outward” functioning and form of a church without the “power” of the Holy Spirit manifesting in and through the church
- Rather than being a dynamic, living, manifestation of Christ in a church as the Body Christ because the members are filled with the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit and functioning according to their spiritual gifts, it becomes an spiritually lifeless “institutional corporation”

When a church functions as a “institutional corporation” it will be like a football game

- There are 22 people on a field who are in desperate need of rest because they are working very hard to be a “success” by winning the game, and thousands of people in the stadium who are in desperate need of exercise because they are sitting on their seats, eating the available refreshments, and watching the game take place hoping their team will win

The Scriptures reveal that every believer is given a spiritual gift or gifts for the proper functioning, building up, and growth of the church as the Body of Christ

- **1 Corinthians 12:7** = *To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.*
- **Ephesians 4:15-16** = *We are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.*
- Just as God designed and created the physical body to (a) have “each part” of the body to be “working properly” so that it will “grow” and be healthy, even more so, God has designed and created the church to be the Body of Christ to be “working properly” according to the spiritual gift(s) He has given to “each part” or “member” so the church can “grow” and be healthy

In fact, so essential are spiritual gifts to the reality of the church being the Body of Christ that Paul says all the members of the Body of Christ functioning according to their spiritual gifts “is Christ,” meaning the reality of Christ Himself manifested and revealed

- **1 Corinthians 12:12** = *For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.*
- The Greek literally says, “so is Christ,” not “so it is with Christ” - it reveals Christ Himself

Spiritual gifts are ultimately manifestations and functioning of the Trinity

- **1 Corinthians 12:4-6** = *Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit;⁵ and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord;⁶ and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.*
- The three Persons of the Trinity are specifically identified as “Spirit,” meaning God the Holy Spirit, “Lord,” meaning God the Son Who became a human being in the Lord Jesus Christ, and “God,” Who is God the Father

This importance of the specific identification of the three Persons of the Trinity at the beginning Paul's teaching concerning "spiritual gifts" is to emphasize that in a similar way to the unity and diversity of the One God Who eternally exists in the unity of three Persons, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, so the church, which is the Body of Christ, is to live and manifest the reality of unity and diversity with and by spiritual gifts

- There is the unity of the "same" "Spirit," "Lord," and "God" Who is working in each and every believer and the church as a whole, yet there is the diversity of the "varieties" "gifts," "service," and "activities"
- The church is to live, manifest, and function in the unity of the one Body in the diversity of the different spiritual gifts

This diversity is manifested in three ways:

(1) "gifts"

- As there are many different members and organs of one human body so there are many different "gifts" of and from the Holy Spirit in the church

(2) "service"

- The Greek word is "diakonia" which means the way a person serves
- Thus, there is a variety of different kinds of "ministries" in the church
- For example, two people can have the gift of teaching, but one's area of ministry is children and another is adults
- Or two people can have the gift of evangelism, but one's area of ministry is one-on-one "street evangelism", and another "mass" or crowd evangelism

While different people are given different "gifts" and various kinds of "service" or "ministry," every single member of the body of Christ is to be doing "the work of ministry"

- **Ephesians 4:11-12** = *He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers,* ¹² *to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ*

- "The saints" is a primary word in the NT that identifies every single Christian

- The "work of ministry" or "work of service" in the church is not the "work" of only, or even exclusively of, those who are "ecclesiastically called" to the "ministry" and become "Ministers"

- While, in one way or another, those who are in "ministry" are in a church "leadership" role as an "apostle," which is a missionary, a "prophet," "evangelist," "shepherd/pastor," or "teacher," an essential responsibility of the "job description" of the "leadership" role that has been given to them by God is "to equip the saints for the work of ministry"

→ While every church is to have "leadership" in ministry, every believer is to be serving in the "work of ministry" according to their "gifts" so that the body of Christ can be "built up"

(3) "activities"

- The Greek word is "energema," literally "something of working or a degree of energy"
- For example, two people can have the gift(s) of healing, and through one there is power in ministry, from one degree to another, in healing individuals, while through another power is manifest to heal many in crowds
- Spiritual gifts are energy and power from God because the power of the Holy Spirit is an absolute requirement to accomplish God's will and manifest the reality of Christ

The reality of the nature of a “spiritual gift” being a “spiritual gift” is expressed in the Greek words translated “*spiritual*” and “*gift*”

(a) “Spiritual”

The Greek word translated as “*spiritual*” in 1 Corinthians 12:1 is “*pneumatikos*”

- The root, “pneuma,” means “spirit,” and the suffix “ikos” means “pertaining to, something from, something of”
- “*Spiritual*” means it “pertains to, is something of and from the spirit or spiritual realm”

The origin, empowerment, and working of a “*spiritual*” gift that is to be functioning in the church as the Body of Christ is the Person of God the Holy Spirit

- As the human being, Jesus of Nazareth, was anointed, filled, and empowered by the Holy Spirit to do the will of God and manifested the power of the kingdom of God by being given manifestations of the “gifts” of the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:18-19), so also are believers in Christ
- It is the Holy Spirit Who gives “spiritual” gifts to each person
- **1 Corinthians 12:4** = *Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit*
- **1 Corinthians 12:7** = *To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good*
- **1 Corinthians 12:11** = *All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.*

This is different from and in distinction to a “*spiritual gift*” originating, being manifested, and coming from the devil or a demon, which tragically can happen in a church

- **1 John 4:1-3** = *Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. ² By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, ³ and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.*
- In this context, “*spirit*” means a prophetic word or teaching that comes from a “*spirit*”
- A “*spirit*” can either be the Holy Spirit “*from God*” or a demon that is “*not from God*”

This is also different from and in distinction to a “*gift*” originating, being manifested, and coming from a human’s mind and heart, which too often is characteristic of “*ministry*”

- Technically, this is called “*soulish*” (Greek *psuchikos*) because the origin and functioning of it is from the human soul and not from the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:14; James 3:15; Jude 19)
- This happens in human “social” programs and mere psychological (soulish) counseling

“*Spiritual*” is not about a higher level of “*spirituality*” of a human but the Holy Spirit

- It means that which is of and “*from*” the Holy Spirit of God
- ➔ **This practically means that believers must be filled with, aware of, sensitive to, yielded to, and obeying the Holy Spirit so “*spiritual*” gifts can manifest and function in them**

(2) “Gift”

The Greek word translated “*gift*” in 1 Corinthians 12:4 is “*charisma*”

- **1 Corinthians 12:4** = *Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit*

- The word translated “*gifts*” is “charisma” and literally means “something of and from grace, the ‘stuff’ of grace”
- This means that the fundamental reason a “*gift*” is given to a person that is from the Holy Spirit is because of the grace of God
- It is not because of the “works” or anything else in, of, and based on the person
- It is ultimately because God gives a gift as He wills because He is pleased to choose a give that gift to one person and not another

The word “grace” is used in two ways in the New Testament, and both are inherent in the word “charisma,” meaning “something of grace”

(1) It is an attribute of God Himself whereby He “freely” chooses to act in mercy to a person, not because of what is in them but because of God’s gracious sovereign choice

- This is most often used of salvation, as in Ephesians 2:8, “*for by grace you have been saved*”

(2) It is an empowerment given to a person because of God’s grace

- This is commonly used in Paul’s greeting to churches “*grace to you*” (1 Cor. 1:3)
- It is specifically spoken of in Romans 1:5, “*through whom we have received grace and apostleship*” which means the empowerment of the gift of grace to function as an “apostle”

A “*spiritual gift*” is a “*pneumatikos charisma*” meaning “some kind of empowerment of grace that comes from the Holy Spirit”

- This means all believers are to be “Spirit-filled charismatic” Christians

While the Scripture makes known that “*spiritual gifts*” are a sovereign gift of God’s grace, the corresponding command of Scripture is that we are to “*desire*” and seek “*spiritual gifts*,” especially the “*greater*” ones that build up the whole body of Christ

- 1 Corinthians 12:31 = *earnestly desire the higher/greater gifts*
- 1 Corinthians 14:1 = *earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy*
- 1 Corinthians 14:39 = *earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues*

This means that we, both individually and as a church, can and, in fact, are commanded to pray for, “*desire*,” seek, and receive other spiritual gifts than the one(s) we have been given

- This is explicitly spoken of by Paul in his letter to the church at Rome
- Romans 1:11 = *I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you*

Numerous spiritual gifts are seen and identified throughout both the OT and the NT

- The following are gifts that can be identified in the New Testament: **apostleship, prophecy, evangelism, pastoring, teaching, preaching, encouraging, giving, leadership, administration, mercy, a word of wisdom, a word of knowledge, faith, working of powers (miracles), healing(s), distinguishing/discerning spirits, tongues/languages, interpretation of tongues, intercession, helps, service, hospitality, celibacy, deliverance (casting out demons)**