

Are the Revelatory Gifts of the Holy Spirit still necessary for the Church Today?

- I. **A general outpouring, fullness, and manifestation of the Holy Spirit and His gifts characterize the whole church age from Pentecost to the Second Coming.**
- a. **Acts 2:16-21 (Joel 2:28-32)** *"This is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel: 'AND IT SHALL BE IN THE LAST DAYS,' God says, 'THAT I WILL POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT UPON ALL MANKIND; AND YOUR SONS AND YOUR DAUGHTERS SHALL PROPHECY, AND YOUR YOUNG MEN SHALL SEE VISIONS, AND YOUR OLD MEN SHALL DREAM DREAMS; EVEN UPON MY BONDSLAVES, BOTH MEN AND WOMEN, I WILL IN THOSE DAYS POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT And they shall prophesy. 'AND I WILL GRANT WONDERS IN THE SKY ABOVE, AND SIGNS ON THE EARTH BENEATH, BLOOD, AND FIRE, AND VAPOR OF SMOKE. THE SUN SHALL BE TURNED INTO DARKNESS, AND THE MOON INTO BLOOD, BEFORE THE GREAT AND GLORIOUS DAY OF THE LORD SHALL COME. AND IT SHALL BE, THAT EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD SHALL BE SAVED.'"*
 - i. **Last days = whole church age**
 - b. **1 Corinthians 13:8-13** *"Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. When I was a child, I used to speak as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known. But now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love."*
 - c. **Ephesians 4:11-13** *"And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ."*
 - d. **1 Thessalonians 5:16-24** *"Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit; do not despise prophetic utterances. But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; abstain from every form of evil. Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass."*
 - i. Paul discusses prophetic utterances in the same breath as he writes about the second coming of Jesus
 - e. **1 Corinthians 1:4-9** *"I thank my God always concerning you, for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus, that in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge, even as the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you, so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."*
 - f. **Mark 16:14-20** *"And afterward He appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining at the table; and He reproached them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who had seen Him after He had risen. And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; they will pick up serpents, and if they*

drink any deadly poison, it shall not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover. So then, when the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them, and confirmed the word by the signs that followed.”

- i. The parallel passage in **Mt 28:18-20** makes it clear: *“And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’”* From this it is obvious that the great commission (and the promises related to it), though spoken originally to the apostles, is meant to extend to “all the nations” and to continue “even to the end of the age”, not just during the limited ministry and lifetime of the twelve.

The Revelatory Gifts of the Holy Spirit

I. Prophecy

- a. Definition: The spiritual gift whereby one readily perceives **divinely revealed information**.
- b. Mentioned in the NT as a spiritual gift in Romans 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:10; 13:2; 13:8; most of 1 Cor. 14
- c. God could speak to us things about individuals, churches, cities, or nations; He could speak about God’s present priorities or His future priorities for any of these things
- d. For our purposes, we will consider the gift of “prophecy” as a general term referring to one’s ability to hear from God, and we will consider the rest of the following gifts as specialized subsets of the “prophetic” or “revelatory” gifts – both of which we will consider to be synonymous. This is not a clear distinction made in Scripture, but it will help with our understanding.

II. Words of Knowledge

- a. Definition: The spiritual gift whereby one readily perceives **divinely revealed facts** about someone else
- b. Mentioned by name only in 1 Cor. 12:8
- c. Scriptural Example: John 4:16-18 – woman at the well
- d. God could speak to us facts about peoples’ names, birthdays, addresses, careers, spiritual gifts, healing needs, emotional needs, trials, families, and etc.
- e. The great benefit of a word of knowledge is that it gives credibility to the rest of our message (John 4:39, 1 Cor. 14:24-25)

III. Words of Wisdom

- a. Definition: the spiritual gift whereby one readily perceives **divinely revealed advice** from someone else.
- b. Mentioned by name only in 1 Cor. 12:8
- c. Scriptural Example: Acts 27:30-31. Paul shares divinely revealed advice that all the sailors should remain on the ship or else they will die on the open sea.
- d. God could give us divinely revealed advice about where to live, what career someone should consider, how to handle a dilemma, and etc.

IV. Discernment of Spirits

- a. Definition: The spiritual gift whereby one readily perceives a **divinely revealed spiritual presence** in or around a person or location.
- b. Mentioned by name only in 1 Cor. 12:10
- c. Scriptural Example: Acts 16:18. Paul perceives and casts out a demonic spirit.
- d. One might be gifted in determining what “kind” of evil spirit is tormenting someone, since there are different kinds of evil spirits (Mark 9:29). Or one might be gifted in perceiving angelic activity.

V. Tongues

- a. Definition: the spiritual gift whereby one readily speaks a **divinely revealed message** in a language unknown to the speaker.
- b. Mentioned in the NT as a spiritual gift in 1 Cor. 12:10; 12:28; 13:1; 13:8; most of 1 Cor. 14.
- c. Scriptural Example: Acts 2. Men spoke about “the wonders of God” (2:11) “as the Spirit gave them utterance” (2:4) in languages unknown to those speaking (2:7-8). Peter later explains that as prophetic phenomenon (2:17-18) because the words these men spoke were from God, even though they didn’t even know what they were saying! In other words, the gift of tongues is speaking God’s words (prophecy) in unknown languages!
- d. While these men spoke audibly before a crowd, it is also possible to pray in tongues in order to edify one’s self (1 Cor. 14:4, 14). If someone speaks in tongues before the congregation in a church service, there should be an interpreter present (1 Cor. 14:28)

VI. Interpretation of Tongues

- a. Definition: The spiritual gift whereby one is readily granted a **divinely revealed understanding** of a message spoken in tongues.
- b. Mentioned in the NT as a spiritual gift in 1 Cor. 12:10; 14:26.
- c. Scriptural examples: We don’t have any examples in the Scripture of people interpreting tongues, but Paul does give us a hypothetical glance at how this gift might operate in a church service (1 Cor. 14:27-28).

Knowing God’s Voice and Growing in Our Gift

- I. Four Ways to KNOW whether a perceived revelation is from God:
 - a. Does it align with the Scripture?
 - i. “if anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you (Scripture) is the Lord’s command” (1 Cor. 14:37)
 - b. Is the revelation encouraging?
 - i. “But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement, and comfort” (1 Cor. 14:3)
 - c. Do you feel some measure of peace about the truth of this revelation?
 - i. Gideon’s confirmation came before he took the risk of obedience (Judges 6:17-24, 26-40)
 - ii. “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:6-7)
 - iii. Sometimes God will give us peace about the accuracy of a revelation if we simply ask for it.
 - d. Have you taken the risk?
 - i. Moses’ confirmation came after he took the risk of obedience: “And this will be the sign that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain” (Ex 3:12).
 - ii. Your confidence level: SOMEWHAT
 - iii. Sometimes God requires us to risk looking silly rather than giving us a deep sense of peace about the accuracy of a revelation beforehand.
- II. Four ways to GROW in our prophetic gift
 - a. Ask
 - i. “You do not have because you do not ask God” (James 4:2)

- ii. Ask persistently (Luke 18:1)
- iii. Ask specifically...
 - 1. ...for accurate words of knowledge
 - 2. ...to hear peoples' names or home addresses or to know what they dreamed last night
 - 3. ...for healing words for individuals
 - 4. ..for whatever you want
- b. Practice
 - i. Paul tells Timothy, "Do not neglect your gift" (1 Ti. 4:14) and "fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you" (2 Ti. 1:6).
 - ii. How often do you use your prophetic gift?
- c. Risk
 - i. We must risk frequent failure if we want to grow.
 - ii. Failure is not a measure of our lack of giftedness; it is a measure of how much risk we are taking
 - iii. When you hear a general word from God, ask for something more specific. I call this "revelation about revelation."
- d. Endure
 - i. Continue on....you will go through seasons, but those who stay consistent will progress in their gift.
 - ii. Spend time inquiring of the Lord for yourself, your church, and your friends! Keep your ear inclined to the Lord. Walk by the Spirit and seek to be in tune with him

Interpreting Revelation

- I. The three stages of prophecy:
 - a. Revelation (what God is saying)
 - b. Interpretation (what it means)
 - c. Application (what to do with it)
- II. How to interpret:
 - a. **STEP 1** – Determine if the revelation is meant to be understood literally or symbolically.
 - i. **Literal Revelation:** a revelation that is meant to be understood in its most basic sense, without metaphor or analogy
 - ii. **Symbolic Revelation:** a revelation that includes metaphors or analogies that must be "decoded" in order to understand the deeper meaning.
 - iii. If the revelation is literal, go to Step 3. If it is symbolic, continue with Step2.
 - b. **STEP 2** – sift through clues to determine symbolism.
 - i. Questions to ask ourselves
 - 1. What kind of symbolism is present?
 - a. Biblical Symbolism: representations that come from the Scripture (i.e. dove, water, blood, cross, etc.)
 - b. Contemporary symbolism: representations that come from daily life (i.e. car, garage, phone, etc.)
 - c. Personal symbolism: representations that God uses to speak personal things to us that things nobody else would understand
 - 2. What is the commonplace associations for this symbol?
 - 3. What "sticks out" the most?

4. One reason God often speaks so mysteriously is that it forces us to rely upon His mercy for an interpretation (cf. Dan. 2:18) Also, God likes imagery because a picture can speak a thousand words.
- c. **STEP 3** – consider what timeframe the revelation refers to
 - i. Revelations can refer to what happened in the past (John 4:17-18) what is happening in the present (2 Kings 6:12), or what will happen in the future (Acts 21:11).
- d. **STEP 4** – get feedback
 - i. If we are ever to grow in our interpretive skills, we must get feedback to determine where we missed it.