

Gift of Prophecy / Introduction

I Corinthians 12: 7-11 *To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.*

8 For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit,

9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit,

10 to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

11 All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

As I have explained on several occasions, the simplest way to describe the gifts of the Spirit is to say that:

Three of them say something.

Three of them do something.

Three of them reveal something.

Three gifts of utterance that say something:

Prophecy

Divers kinds of tongues

Interpretation of tongues

Three gifts of power that do something:

The gift of faith

The working of miracles

The gifts of healings



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Three gifts of revelation that reveal something:

The word of wisdom

The word of knowledge

The discerning of spirits

In this message, we will begin our discussion of the three gifts of inspiration or utterance.

Of these three gifts, in my opinion, prophesy is most important.

The reason is that it takes the other two inspirational gifts, divers kinds of tongues and the interpretation of tongues to equal prophesy.

Let's take a look at *1 Corinthians 14: 5 ESV* ***Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up.***

1 Corinthians 14: 5 KJV ***I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.***

To be clear, the reason why I believe that prophesy is more important than tongues and interpretation is because it only involves one individual.

It only requires one gift to be completed.

Prophesy is a supernatural utterance in a *known* or *understood* language.

Divers kinds of tongues is a supernatural utterance in an *unknown* tongue.

Interpretation of tongues is a supernatural showing forth of that which has been said in an unknown tongue.

The Hebrew meaning of the phrase, "to prophesy" is to *flow forth*.

It also carries with it the thought: *to bubble forth like a fountain, to let drop, to lift up, to tumble forth, and to spring forth.*

The Greek word that is translated “prophesy” means *to speak for another.*

So, prophesy can mean to speak for God, or to be His spokesman.

Let’s look again at ***1 Corinthians 14: 1, KJV Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.***

1 Corinthians 14: 1, ESV Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy.

We are told to desire spiritual gifts, but especially that we might prophesy.

This doesn’t mean we are not to desire the other gifts, but we are to especially desire to prophesy.

Again, in ***1 Corinthians 14: 39, ESV So, my brothers, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues.***

So, would we be out of order if we said that God through Paul spoke to the Church at Corinth, (and it applies to the Church everywhere) to desire spiritual gifts, but rather that we may prophesy.

Foretelling vs. Forth Telling

The simple gift of prophesy should not be confused with the prophetic office or with prophetic utterance that may come forth in the prophet’s ministry.

1 Corinthians 14: 3 ESV On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation.

1 Corinthians 14: 3 KJV But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

So, we can see that the simple gift of prophesy in the New Testament, there is no revelation involved.

The simple gift of prophesy is given for edification, exhortation, and comfort.

However, in the office of the prophet, we very often find that revelation and foretelling does come forth, and at times through the vehicle of various gifts.

Its also interesting to note the difference between prophesy in the Old Testament and prophesy in the New Testament.

In the Old Testament, prophesy was essentially *foretelling*, but in the New Testament, we see that the gift of prophesy shifts strongly to *forth telling*.

Forth-telling may be simply defined as speaking forth (out) God's Word to those whom God desired to hear it.

The Gift of Prophesy vs. the Office of the Prophet

As we have said, the gift of prophesy should not be confused with the prophetic office.

The simple gift of prophesy has no new revelation in it.

Let's compare a couple of verses that might help with our thinking on this subject.

1 Corinthians 14: 3-4 On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation.

4 The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church.

Now, let's take a look at Agabus in Acts.

Acts 11: 27-30 Now in these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch.

28 And one of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world (this took place in the days of Claudius).

29 So the disciples determined, every one according to his ability, to send relief to the brothers living in Judea.

30 And they did so, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.



Acts 21: 10 While we were staying for many days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea.

11 And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'This is how the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'"

Now look at ***Acts 21: 8-9 On the next day we departed and came to Caesarea, and we entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him.***

9 He had four unmarried daughters, who prophesied.

All four of Philip's daughters were used in the simple gift of prophesy.

They must have prophesied in the services held in their home because otherwise, how would Paul have known that they prophesied if he had not heard them himself.

So, we know that Philip's daughters spoke to the whole company to edification, exhortation and comfort. ***(I Corinthians 14: 3 KJV But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.)***

Misuses of the Gift of Prophecy

Misuses of this gift has caused much confusion in the body of Christ.

I am aware of such travesties in the name of the gifts.

One such account involved a woman telling of how she attended a prayer group where all they did was lay hands on each other and prophesied over each other.

She went on to state that if anything in these meetings ever came to pass, she wasn't aware of it.

She said that hands were laid on her and she was told that her mother was going to die within six months.

Many years had passed and her mother was still with her.



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She continued to say that one of them told her that her husband would leave her within a year.

Many years had passed and she was still happily married, her words, not mine.

These people were not even able to pull off the correctness of a broken clock, which is correct twice a day.

These people were misusing whatever gift they may have had.

But if people would just stay with the simple gift of prophesy, they would, ***speak to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation.***

It is amazing to me how many people have followed the wrong teaching about this subject.

But there is no good that comes from backing off from the real and the genuine because of the counterfeit.

Never forget that there can be no counterfeit anything in this world, if the real doesn't exist.

No, this is all the more reason that we need to allow the Holy Spirit to demonstrate the genuine gifts of the Spirit through us and show people from the word of God what is real.

The Holy Spirit Manifests Himself as We Seek the Lord

Acts 13: 1-4 Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

Notice that it was as they ministered to the Lord and fasted that the Holy Spirit manifested Himself.



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Closing Thoughts

I have endeavored to teach about the subject of the Holy Spirit and His gifts by consistently showing you examples of each gift in the Old Testament.

However lets take a lok at one more New Testament passage before we go there..

Ephesians 5: 18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

19 speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

With this passage of scripture in mind, turn to the Old Testament book of Psalms 1 and take the time this week to read a book that is replete with the manifestation of this gift.

What this tells me that this gift is also very important to our personal life of worship for Father and the building of our personal relation with Him