

# THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

## THE PROMISE OF THE FATHER

### I. INTRODUCTION

The last words of the Lord Jesus Christ, before He ascended to Heaven, are recorded in Acts 1:4-5. In these verses, those listening to Him were commanded to wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father, of which He had earlier spoken. He refers back to the words of John the Baptist, regarding the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, and He promises them power to witness for Him in Jerusalem, in Judea and Samaria and extending to the farthest points of the earth." (v8)

After the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2) the Apostle Peter begins his sermon with, "this is that which is spoken of by the prophet Joel". (Joel 2:28-29)

Yet many believers today still will not accept the biblical experience of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. This is the experience that changed those early disciples from fearful followers, hiding behind locked doors (John 20:19) to bold ministers (Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists) ministering the Word of God in great power (Acts 17:6) "**turning the world up side down**".

### II. WHAT IS THE PROMISE OF THE FATHER?

Joel 2:28-29 **foretells in 835 BC the pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh**. In the book of Acts, the fulfillment of this scripture is recorded. At that time both Jews and Gentiles received the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the speaking of unknown tongues.

Joel prophesied, "Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions; **and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.**" (Joel 2:29-30)

What an incredible promise (Jn 14:16,26) to all believers, of any age group, both men and women of any culture, creed or cast. The promised gift of the Holy Spirit was to be given freely to all who desired it. The Apostle Peter announced the fulfillment of Christ's promise in Acts 2. The promise of the Father prophesied by Christ was indeed fulfilled by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit ten days after Christ ascended to His Father in Heaven.

### III. THE PROMISE OF THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Each gospel mentions the ministry and preaching of John the Baptist; who called for repentance towards God. This new spiritual lifestyle of faith towards God was confirmed by water baptism in the river Jordan where John the Baptist baptized by immersion.

Those who were not prepared to change their lives, (particularly the Pharisees and the Sadducees and other religious leaders who were looking to outward forms of works to verify their righteousness) were publicly chastised by John the Baptist: "O generation of vipers ... bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance" (Matthew 3:7-8).

John the Baptist pointed repentant believers to the "Greater" One to come (Jesus Christ). He prophesied that "**He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire**". Matthew 3:11, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16, John 1:33

According to these scriptures the promise of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost was very much in the ministry vision of John the Baptist. **Repentance and a changed life, together with the baptism in water, was simply a preparation for the coming Messiah and His greater baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire.** John did not look at the baptism in water as an end in itself.

### IV. JESUS REFERS TO THE COMING BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

#### 1. The Holy Spirit as "Living Water"

In John 7:37-39, Jesus Christ identifies the Feast (when the water was poured out), as a type of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Christ stated that the living water of the Holy Spirit would pour forth from the belly of the believer. "**He that believeth on me (Jesus), as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.**"

Jesus Himself identifies this flowing forth as the Holy Spirit, which those that believed on Him would receive. This was prophesied as a future experience, because **the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was dependent on the ascension of Jesus to the Father.**

Many of the people who listened to the ministry of Christ identified Him as the promised Prophet mentioned in Deuteronomy 18:15.

**ACTS 3:22** For Moses truly said unto the fathers, a prophet shall the Lord your God

raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.

## 2. **The Holy Ghost revealed as the future Comforter.**

John 14:16,17,26. As Jesus Christ prepared His disciples for His departure, He spoke again of the Comforter "which is the Holy Ghost". (v26) Jesus promised that He would ask the Father for this One (the Comforter) to be sent. The Father would send the Holy Ghost to teach the disciples all things, reminding them of the teachings of Christ.

The promised "comforter" (John 14:16) "**shall be in you.**"

This promise of the indwelling presence of the Holy Ghost was to be one of the great changes that the Baptism of the Holy Ghost would accomplish. Rather than just accompanying the disciples, **the Holy Spirit would actually come and dwell within the body of the believer forever.** Prophets, and men of God in the Old Testament, knew the presence of the Holy Spirit coming upon them - at which time they prophesied and gave the word of the Lord. The Holy Spirit came upon them in great strength, but then lifted from them after they had prophesied. e.g. 2 Chronicles 20:14, 1 Samuel 19:20-21.

NOTE\* David's plea in Psalm 51:11 ..."and **take not thy holy spirit from me.**" He valued God's presence, because he feared God.

## 3. **The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit depended on the Ascension and Glorification of Jesus Christ.**

John 16:7 "**It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.**"

Jesus Christ knew that the sending of the Holy Ghost into the world as the indwelling "Spirit Baptizer" was dependent on His ascending to the Father, to be glorified. So the experience of the Holy Ghost would be much different from that which earlier men and women of God had experienced.

## 4. **Jesus breathed on His disciples BEFORE the ascension.**

John 20:22. **Jesus breathed on the disciples and prayed "Receive ye the Holy Ghost."** But there was no evidence of speaking in tongues. He had already said that He had to return to the Father before the Holy Ghost could be sent, and He also told them to wait in Jerusalem for the Promise of the Father. It was a word of promise to the disciples.

## V. JESUS' FINAL INSTRUCTIONS TO HIS DISCIPLES

Mark 16:15-17 In the Great Commission given by Jesus in the Gospel according to Mark, the believers were to continue to believe for signs and wonders as they had experienced whilst accompanying Jesus Christ in His short ministry.

Mark 16:17 Jesus prophesied that “new tongues” would come. One of the greatest contentions in Christendom has been the “tongues” of Acts. I have heard some say it was only for that era. I have heard others say, “it’s from the devil”. We must always fulfill Bible prophecy and must always embrace “the new tongues” wholehearted without fear or doubt. This end-time sign is from God Himself. If Jesus said “they shall speak”, then we need to speak.

This first occurred on the day of Pentecost. The Lord was already preparing them for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit which was soon to come. The speaking in tongues was also linked to other demonstrations of signs and wonders - such as casting out devils, and healing the sick.

## VI. THE PROMISE FULFILLED

Acts 2:1-13 records the outstanding account of the promised day of Pentecost when **the Holy Ghost was outpoured upon the disciples in great power, like the roar of a tornado strength wind**. Surely this was the initiating of greater and more personal spiritual experiences for the people of God. The fire of God was on their heads, in the shape of cloven tongues. From this time on they were to be "ministers of fire". (Psalms 104:4; Hebrews 1:7) Their mouths were speaking forth other tongues under the power of the Holy Spirit, telling the wonderful works of God. They were staggering about as drunken men, under the power of the Holy Ghost within.

**Acts 2:4** And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and **began to speak with other tongues**, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Peter's sermon reveals one of the great transformations of the Bible. From the frightened disciple who betrayed the Lord on the night of His crucifixion, who hid behind closed doors and who wanted to return to fishing, Peter is now boldly preaching without fear, and understanding the revelation of the Spirit. This transformation took place in just a few hours.

Acts 2:38-39. Peter preached a message of repentance, calling for all people to repent. He encouraged the believers to receive what the disciples had received, the gift of the Holy Ghost. **"The promise is unto to you and to your children, and to all those afar off, and even as many as the Lord our God shall call"**.

There is no limit on the receiving of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, however they are only given those who have received Christ. (Eph 1:3)

## **VII. OTHER ACCOUNTS IN THE BOOK OF ACTS OF THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY GHOST**

### **1. The First Gentiles Baptized in the Holy Ghost.**

Acts 10:44-48. This biblical account records the first outpouring of the Holy Ghost on Gentile believers, on the Italian Cornelius and his band. The outpouring is associated once again with the speaking in unknown tongues and magnifying God. Because these Gentiles spoke in tongues, Peter had no hesitation in believing that they had received the Holy Ghost, even though Peter and the other Jews with him were astonished at the happening. Until that time Peter and the other disciples with him had believed that all God's blessings were intended for the Jews.

v.46 For **they heard them speak with tongues**, and magnify God.

In Acts 11:15-17, Peter recounts the experience to the other Jews in Jerusalem. He explicitly says in verse 15, "the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning." Peter then recalls the Lord Jesus referring to the words of John the Baptist and the coming baptism of the Holy Ghost. The Gentiles had received the same experience as the Jews on the day of Pentecost.

### **2. The Disciples at Ephesus**

In Acts 19:2-7 Paul found believers who had only received John's water baptism for repentance. Paul laid his hands upon them (v.6). Once again, the speaking in unknown tongues was manifested as the Holy Ghost came upon these disciples. The record also shows that these twelve disciples prophesied as they received the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

**Acts 19:6** And when Paul had laid *his* hands upon them, **the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.**

Note: Paul's first question to the Ephesus believers. "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed"? Acts 19:2 shows believers today, the importance of receiving this separate experience of being baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Like Paul, we need to ask Christians if they have received the Holy Ghost; and if they do not speak in tongues, we need to pray for them that they may also receive of God.

Paul went into the synagogue in Ephesus and spoke boldly for three months of the things concerning the kingdom of God. (Acts 19:8) It is quite probable that he would have been teaching on the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, with the evidence of speaking in unknown tongues, which he had just ministered to John's disciples. (Acts 19:6) John's disciples not only spoke in unknown tongues, but they prophesied as well.

Spirit-filled (tongue talking believers) should realize that the baptism of the Holy Spirit brings the enabling to operate all nine Holy Spirit gifts necessary to do God's work.

Paul's letter to the Ephesian Church speaks of the "sealing of that Holy Spirit of promise", received "after that ye believed". (Eph 1:13).

In Ephesians 5:18-19 Paul admonishes the believers to be "filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." **These spiritual songs, or songs of the spirit, would certainly include singing in unknown tongues.**

The letter to the church at Ephesus was also circulated to other Christian communities so that all believers had common ground.

### 3. **The Disciples at Colossae and Corinth**

Colossians 3:16 also includes an admonition to enter into "spiritual song". In this scripture, the implication is to do this as a body, "teaching and admonishing one another".

In Paul's first letter to the church at Corinth, it is apparent that the Corinthians spoke in tongues. 1 Corinthians, Chapters 12 & 14.

### 4. **The Experience of the Apostle Paul**

Acts 9:1-20 records the well known conversion of the Pharisee Saul. In verse 17, Ananias acknowledges Saul as a brother in Christ. Upon the laying on of hands to be filled with the Holy Ghost, he arose and was baptized.

It is evident that Paul spoke with tongues. First, in the account in Acts 19:6. Second, in **1 Corinthians 14:18, Paul writes, "I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all."**

### 5. **The Experience of the Samaritans**

Acts 8:5-8, 14-18 records the revival conducted by Philip the Evangelist. Many became believers. **The Apostles at Jerusalem sent Peter and John down to Samaria especially to lay hands on them to receive the Holy Ghost.** The record of Acts specifically says that He had fallen on none of them, but they had been baptized in water. These disciples received the Holy Ghost as the apostles laid their hands on them. **The evidence the apostles used to ascertain whether the Samaritans had received the Holy Ghost was that they had spoken with unknown tongues.**

Simon the sorcerer had personally witnessed Holy Spirit revival in some of the Disciples after receiving the Holy Spirit. He then requested the same “power” that he had seen others receive. The word used for “power” in this verse is “**exousia**”, meaning authority. Simon saw there were changes in the lives of those who received the Holy Ghost. Of course, Simon the sorcerer was greatly rebuked by Peter for thinking that the gift of God could be purchased with money.

## **VIII. THE CONTINUING PROMISE OF THE FATHER**

The experience of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost has never been withdrawn by God. It was the desire of the Father that all those who call upon the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ be endued with power from God. It was not just an experience for those during first years of the early church.

Believers are to be “temples” of the Holy Ghost, both individually, and corporately as one body. (1 Corinthians 6:19, Ephesians 2:21-22). Wherever believers have sought the Lord with open believing hearts, the baptism of the Holy Spirit will come upon them, with speaking in unknown tongues. The “tongues” is the overflow of the “infilling”.

**Pastors must ask the sheep the same question as Paul.** "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" Peter and Paul looked for the evidence of receiving. **If a believer had not spoken in tongues, then this is one of the first things they attended too.**

Many times, the Disciples of Christ had times of rejoicing as they experienced the power of God during their 3 years with Christ. (Luke 10:17) Even though they witnessed the miraculous power of the Lord, they had not yet received the power that they needed for ministry after the ascension of Jesus.

There was much joy when the first Samaritans believed on Christ Jesus. **(Acts 8:8) However, this was not the baptism of the Holy Spirit.**

Believers today may experience great joy as they give their lives to Christ. They all

enter into that new life found in Christ Jesus. (2 Corinthians 5:17-18)

1 Peter 1:23 speaks of being born again, "...by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever". Verse 22 says "ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren".

**However, this experience is the spiritual new birth and is separate experience to the Baptism in the Holy Spirit.**

## **IX. RECEIVING THE PROMISE OF THE FATHER**

The disciples waited in Jerusalem in one accord and one spirit, until the day of Pentecost was fulfilled and the Holy Ghost was poured out. From that time, it was not necessary to wait.

**Paul was filled with the Spirit as soon as Ananias laid hands on him.** (Acts 9:17-18)

**Cornelius and his band received the Holy Ghost and spoke in tongues even as Peter was sharing the Word.** (Acts 10:44)

**The disciples at Ephesus received the Holy Spirit as soon as Paul laid hands on them.** (Acts 19:6)

## **X. CONCLUSION**

Today in many nations God is still outpouring His Holy Ghost, as recorded in the book of Acts. Millions of believers have and are receiving this powerful experience, even in the most remote areas of the world.

God is fulfilling over and over again the prophecy of Joel 2:28-29, "I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh".

**As believers, we need to answer with a resounding "YES" the question in Acts 19:2:**

**"HAVE YE RECEIVED THE HOLY GHOST SINCE YE BELIEVED?"**

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# FASTING

## I. INTRODUCTION

Fasting has been recorded from ancient times. The Greek philosopher Asclepiades advocated fasting for curative purposes. The Roman historian Plutarch said, "Instead of using medicine, fast for a day." Ancient Chinese and Hindu writings speak of fasting. Indians, including Gandhi during his life, have practiced fasting. Muslims fast 30 days each year during Ramadan, and consider fasting to be one of the 4 pillars of their faith. The American Indians practice fasting for religious purposes. Witches fast to effect curses. Indonesian tribal firewalkers fast before walking on fire.

These records of fasting by unbelievers are indicators of the power of fasting. God wants His people to have the benefits of fasting as they serve Him. Today, fasting is an often neglected teaching and rare experience in the lives of many believers. Those who fast may be considered somewhat radical. Others wrongly fear that their health may suffer from fasting.

## II. WHAT IS FASTING?

Fasting has been described as "covering the mouth", meaning abstaining from food. A few times in the scripture, a total fast is recorded. A total fast is usually a short fast, and describes abstaining from water as well as food.

Scriptural fasting is not dieting, although on long fasts some weight will be lost. Normal weight will be regained as eating is resumed.

The body is refreshed in a true spiritual fast.  
Isaiah 58:8 ...and thine health shall spring forth speedily...

## III. WHY SHOULD CHRISTIANS FAST?

In the scriptures, examples of fasting occur often. Fasting is mentioned 74 times. With the great men of God, it was an integral part of their lives. Jesus said that His disciples would fast when He had ascended to heaven. (Matthew 9.15)

Fasting wonderfully enhances our spiritual perceptions. When combined with prayer, there is a greater and more rapid spiritual growth. An increased desire for a deeper

relationship with the Lord is created.

As you enter into the fasted lifestyle, expect God to work profound changes in your life.

#### **IV. TYPES OF FASTS RECORDED IN THE BIBLE**

##### **A. THE 40 DAY FAST**

1. Moses: Deuteronomy 9:9,18. This is an unusual experience, as he neither ate nor drank while he was on Mount Sinai with God for 40 days receiving the Ten Commandments. Then the experience was repeated, for a total of 80 days. God completely sustained him. At the end of this wonderful fast, Moses' face shone with the glory of God. Exodus 34:29-30; 2 Corinthians 3:7-8.

2. Elijah: 1 Kings 19:7-8. He went in the strength of that meat for 40 days and nights. The implication is that he would have drunk water during that time, but eaten no food. Elijah was a man who prayed effectually and fervently, although he was a man of like passions as we are. James 5:16.

3. David: Psalm 109:23-24. This scripture suggests a long fast. It is considered prophetic of Christ's 40 day fast.

4. Jesus: Matthew 4:1-2. He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted.

Mark 1:12. "The spirit driveth Him into the wilderness".

There was a strong leading and driving of the Spirit for Jesus to enter into this 40 day fast. Jesus hungered, not thirsted, at the end of the fast, so presumably he drank water during the fast.

Luke 4:14. Jesus returned **IN THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT**. The Holy Spirit had descended upon Him before this fast. With this fast, there was an amplification of the mighty power of the Spirit in His life.

Luke 4:18. When He had completed this fast, Jesus declared, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me." Thereafter, Jesus officially began His earthly ministry.

##### **B. FASTING TOGETHER AS A GROUP**

Many times, group fasts are in response to a specific crisis or need. It is good for your group of believers to have a specific goal or purpose for a fast.

1. Esther 4:16. Esther, her maidens, and all the Jews in Shushan fasted for 3 days.

They neither ate nor drank for this period, which was a total fast.

2. Jonah 3:5-10. All Ninevah repented and fasted totally, including the animals, neither eating nor drinking. The length of the fast is not indicated.

3. 2 Chronicles 20:1-4. In the crisis facing King Jehosophat and all of Judah, a national fast was proclaimed. See also Judges 20:26.

4. Ezra 8:21-22. A group of Jews in Babylon sought God's protection as they prepared to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple. At the end of 70 years of servitude in Babylon, the Jews fasted and prayed together for God's protection.

In each of these occasions, God saw their works, and His ear was open to their cry as the people fasted and prayed.

### **C. FASTING FOR DELIVERANCE**

Individuals responded to times of crisis and mourning by fasting.

1. King Darius fasted totally all night during Daniel's time in the lion's den. (Daniel 6:18)

2. Ezra the prophet mourned because of the sins of the people and fasted totally. (Ezra 10:6) See also Nehemiah 1:3-5.

### **D. FASTING FOR REVELATION OF SCRIPTURE**

Daniel fasted for revelation and understanding of the scriptures. Daniel 9:3. Daniel's fast brought forth the great revelation of the Seventy Weeks Prophecy.

Jesus mentions Daniel's revelations in Matthew 24:15, the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the Prophet.

### **E. ABSTAINING FROM "PLEASANT FOODS"**

1. Daniel 1:12, 16. Daniel adopted a lifestyle of eating simple foods which was suited to his Jewish calling.

2. Daniel 10:3. This was a 21 day fast, possibly eating only lentils and pulses,

(vegetables) without spices and added sauces.

These fasts resulted in some of the greatest and far reaching revelations of Scriptures, especially of the end times.

This type of fasting, abstaining from "pleasant foods", is very practical for those engaged in heavy physical work and who otherwise would feel they could not undertake a long fast. It is very practical for those who may suffer from a medical condition, such as diabetes, and feel they could not fast with safety.

## **V. BIBLICAL REASONS FOR SPIRITUAL FASTING**

1. To afflict and humble our souls before God. Without this humility, our fasting is in vain. Psalm 35:13; Psalm 69:10-11; Ezra 8:21-23; Nehemiah 1:4.

2. Jesus said his disciples would fast when He had ascended. Matthew 9:15-17. Now that the Bridegroom is absent, fasting is important. In this scripture, fasting is linked with preparation of the spirit to receive the new garment, and the new wine of His glorious gospel. Fasting helps to create a hunger for God within our spirit, and a willingness to yield to the Holy Spirit.

3. To help give power in the ministry of casting out demons. Matthew 17:21. Jesus returned from His 40 day fast "in the Power of the Spirit" even though earlier He had been filled with the Holy Spirit. Fasting will also increase the flow of the Holy Spirit in our spiritual ministry. Please note that Jesus did not need to go away a few days and fast, before casting out the devil. Jesus was already in the anointing to cast out devils.

4. Fasting is associated with ministry to the Lord. Luke 2: 36-37. Anna, the widow and prophetess of the Lord "served God with fasting and prayer night and day." Consequently she was spiritually prepared when Jesus was brought as a baby to the Temple to give a powerful witness of the Saviour.

Acts 13:2. The elders were "ministering to the Lord" on a fasting day, when Barnabas and Saul were sent out by the Holy Spirit on the first missionary journey.

5. Occasions for anointing and decision. Ezra 8:21 The Jews returning to Jerusalem across enemy territory from Babylon, fasted for safety for themselves, their children and their stuff.

Acts 13:3 The apostles and prophets at Jerusalem were fasting as the Holy Ghost spoke and commissioned Barnabas and Saul for the first missionary journey.

Acts 14:43 Fasting was employed before the appointment of elders in the new churches of Asia by Barnabas and Paul.

6. To receive greater revelations of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 10:30 Peter was waiting on the Lord, and presumably fasting, as he became very hungry. While Peter fasted, he received the revelation of the inclusion of the Gentiles into the church. Later, Cornelius and his band received the Holy Ghost.

7. Directing repentance towards God.

Daniel 9:3-19. Daniel was confessing the sins of Israel.

Nehemiah 1:4-11. Nehemiah confessed the sins of the children of Israel.

Isaiah 58: 3-14. This is one of the great expositions of fasting in the scripture. This scripture shows the heart condition necessary before God for an effective fast. Fasting but maintaining a wicked lifestyle does not please God. The fast that God has chosen requires repentance and changes in our lifestyle.

Matthew 6:16. We fast to God and not as a show to man.

8. To call on God for Revival.

Joel 2:12,15-16. This is a solemn group fast, and the usual daily lifestyle was set aside during the fast period.

A solemn assembly is associated with deep repentance for national sins, and not just individual sins.

See Daniel 9 and Nehemiah 1.

## **VI. EXAMPLES OF FASTING IN THE LIVES OF THE APOSTLES**

### **Paul**

Acts 9:9. A three (3) day fast, neither eating nor drinking.

2 Corinthians 6:4,5 ...approving ourselves as ministers by fasting.

2 Corinthians 11:27 ...in fasting often, as well as being engaged in hungering and thirsting if necessary.

1 Corinthians 9:27. Keeping the body under includes fasting.

### **Peter**

Acts 10:30. This passage records Peter's marvelous encounter with Cornelius and his band (fellow ministers) which resulted in the first Gentiles being filled with the Holy Spirit.

## Prophets and Teachers

Acts 13:1-2. Barnabas, Simeon, Lucius and Manaen. They fasted prior to the ordination service of Paul, and likewise the elders of the new churches. (Acts 14:23)

## VII. RESULTS OF SPIRITUAL FASTING

In Isaiah 58 there are wonderful promises of what God will do in response to a Biblical fast:

v6: loose bands of wickedness

undo heavy burdens

set the oppressed free

break every yoke

v7: release the desire to help the poor and hungry

family relationships are restored

v8: spiritual light breaks forth

health springs forth "speedily"

(Many natural healing authorities also advocate fasting as a health promoting practice).

thy righteousness is revealed

the glory of the Lord is our protection

v9: a quick answer from God is given to those who fast and pray.

v10: thy light shall rise, and even the darkness shall be light.

v11: the continual guidance of the Lord is promised;

continual satisfaction of the Lord even in difficult times.

v12: rebuilding of waste places

spiritual foundations of many generations of righteous shall be laid

you shall be one to repair the breaches

you shall be one to restore the paths of the Lord to dwell in

v13: honouring the Lord with a spiritual lifestyle

v14: riding upon the high places of the earth

v15: the heritage of Jacob, the breaking out of limitations which would bind our lives, is promised.

## **VIII. WHY THE FASTED LIFE?**

A. The fasted life or “fasting lifestyle” gives God greatly access to our inner man. The power of the WORD is released in a greater dimension because the flow of the river of God is increased in our lives.

B. We lean on food too much. God wants us to lean on Him much more. Deuteronomy 8:3b, Matthew 4:4 "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

C. A regular lifestyle of fasting helps us to be ready for greater more meaningful fasts. Intercession should always be done with fasting. I liken fasting to tuning up our inner spiritual instrument.

D. A fasted lifestyle brings a greater hunger for God and His righteousness. The quickening of the Holy Spirit reveals hidden areas of our lives that need to be changed.

### **Do not become discouraged at opposition to fasting!**

Psalm 35:13 ..."my prayer returned into mine own bosom".

We are attaining a new depth in God, and the benefits will come to pass.

Our physical body may give various symptoms, but these will pass, especially after the first several days.

Do not give in, but press on into God! Others may react negatively and try to discourage the one fasting by giving well meaning warnings.

**But if we follow the Bible pattern, then we will receive the Bible blessings.**

## **IX. CONCLUSION**

The great men of God in both the Old and New Testament are recorded as fasting. Those facing great needs and crises fasted. People who are used of God today are involved in fasting regularly.

So let us enter into this wonderful ministry before the Lord.

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# THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

## INTRODUCTION:

God has blessed the body of Christ with various spiritual gifts. Our subject is the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit and their operation in the body of Christ. God's desire is that these gifts should operate freely. Yet many believers who are baptized in the Holy Spirit do not exercise any gift. Many in the body of Christ are ignorant of how these gifts may be used, and, indeed, if they can be used, in their Christian lives. The Apostle Paul introduces his discussion of the gifts of the Holy Spirit to the Corinthian church by admonishing them "not to be ignorant" concerning spiritual gifts. (1 Corinthians 12:1)

## GOD HAS GIVEN THE GIFTS TO THE CHURCH:

### 1. The Gifts work by Love:

1 Corinthians 12 and 14 are the main chapters in the New Testament where the gifts of the Holy Spirit are discussed and at least some of their workings are defined. Not that the well-known "Love Chapter" of the Bible is located between chapters 12 and 14. All the gifts of the Holy Spirit flow from the foundation of the love of God to His Church. In 1 Corinthians 13:1-3, Paul considers the gifts of tongues, prophecy, and revelatory understanding as empty soundings if the working of a spiritual gift is not done with love for the body of Christ. Paul counters any personal pride in the use of such gifts.

### 2. The Gifts are given by Grace:

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are not earned by works. The Greek word translated "gift" is "charisma" which has the meaning of "grace or favour". 1 Corinthians 12:7 says that the Holy Spirit is manifested (**Gk:** phaneros) in the gifts – the meaning is a "shining forth" or a "making visible" of the Holy Spirit of God, to exhibit His love and power. So the gifts of the Holy Spirit are an outworking of the gift of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Paul teaches us that the gifts differ according to the grace or favour of God that is given to us. (Romans 12:6)

### 3. The Gifts do not indicate spirituality or character:

(Romans 12:6) Because the gifts are of God's grace alone, they are not indications of the spirituality of the believer who may be using a particular gift. The operation of a gift reveals the grace of God working by the Holy Spirit in a believer.

### 4. All spirit-believers can manifest the Gifts of the Holy Spirit:

The ability to use the gifts of the Holy Spirit is available to *every Holy Ghost filled believer*. In fact, the Holy Spirit filled believer should be expecting to both use the gifts of the Holy Spirit and be used by God in ministry. Doubts, fears, inhibitions and all hindrances should be surrendered to the Lord. Paul encourages believers to present their bodies to God for service (Romans 12:1). The yielding of our bodies (tongues, hands, and voices) in the use of spiritual gifts is a necessary service to the Lord Jesus Christ. In 2 Timothy 1:6 Paul encourages Timothy to stir up the gift that was given by the laying on of hands.

## **GUIDELINES WHEN USING THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:**

### **1. The Gifts are to profit the whole Church:**

Different gifts are given to different members of the body of Christ, but the desire of the Holy Spirit is that all members of a church body should benefit by their use. Each gift should show the love of God to His Church – whether it is a teaching, a doctrine, a revelation, or some miraculous use of the power gifts. All are to be used excellently, for the profit of the body of Christ. (1 Corinthians 14:6,12).

### **2. The Gifts of the Holy Spirit work together:**

(1 Corinthians 12:18) There is an interdependence of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In the natural body, the various members work and co-operate together to fulfill a task. So it is with the workings of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The exercise of one gift of the Spirit may also require another gift for the total fulfillment of the purpose of God. 1 Corinthians 12:4 states that there are diversities (or differences) of gifts, but the same Spirit. Over all, it is the same Holy Spirit moving to strengthen the body of Christ. (1 Corinthians 12:19-25).

### **3. The different gifts may be administered in a variety of ways:**

1 Corinthians 12:5. For instance, prophecy may be spoken or sung. Healing may be accomplished by the laying on of hands, or a spoken word, or even prayer over a cloth which is then placed on the sick person. The word of knowledge may be brought out in a prophetic utterance. Whichever way the gifts are used, it is the working of the Holy Spirit.

### **4. There are different ways in which gifts may operate:**

(1 Corinthians 12:6) For instance, a word of knowledge may reveal a physical need in the body, or a spiritual need in a person, or a situation. The word may be revealed to the believer in a variety of ways – by a vision, by a word in the spirit or by an inner knowing or a revelation. Prophecy may deepen from exhortation, edification and comfort, into a realm of revelation beyond the ordinary use. This would require an excellent and greater anointing in the gift. 1 Corinthians 14:6 shows that speaking may be by revelation, by knowledge, by prophesying, or by doctrine. Let us allow the

gifts that we exercise to deepen in both revelation and power as we wait upon the Lord.

## **THE NINE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

**1 Corinthians 12:8-11** gives a list of the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit. For convenience of study they are grouped in three sections:

### **1. THE GIFT OF SPEAKING IN UNKNOWN TONGUES.**

The gift of Speaking in Unknown Tongues was first experienced on the Day of Pentecost when the disciples received the mighty Baptism of the Holy Ghost. (Acts 2:4).

In Mark 16:17, the Lord Jesus had referred to this gift just prior to His ascension. Jesus had promised that the believer would speak in unknown tongues in the Name of Jesus.

Speaking in unknown tongues is also recorded in Acts 10:44, when the Gentiles first received the Baptism of the Holy Ghost.

The believers in Ephesus spoke in unknown tongues and prophesied when they received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:6). The gift of Speaking in Unknown Tongues is therefore an important sign that the believer has received the Baptism of the Holy Ghost.

## **USING THE GIFT OF SPEAKING IN TONGUES**

In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul explains the use of the gift of Tongues. Paul contrasts the private worship in unknown tongues with the use of tongues in a body of believers.

### **A. PRIVATE USE OF SPEAKING TONGUES:**

#### **1. Worship to God:**

When a believer speaks in tongues in worship to God, he is speaking mysteries to God. Do not disparage these mysteries just because the intellect may not understand them. In verses 2 and 5, Paul encourages all believers to speak in tongues as private worship to God. There is no limit to the praise and worship a believer can give to God praying in unknown tongues because this is the Holy Spirit praying through the believer.

The spirit filled believer worshipping in tongues may realize that further unknown tongues are being added to him to he yields is spirit more deeply to the Holy Spirit.

#### **2. Edification of the believer is an important function of the gift of Tongues:**

**1 Corinthians 14:4** reveals that the believer is edifying himself while he is speaking in tongues. The believer is building up his own spiritual life by speaking in tongues. A flow of the Holy Spirit is released in the believer's life as he prays in unknown tongues, and sensitivity to the Holy Spirit is developed. Jesus said that out of the believer's innermost belly would flow rivers of living water under the power of the Holy Spirit. (John 7:38-39). **Jude 20** encourages us to pray in the Holy Ghost for edification. This certainly includes praying in unknown tongues.

3. Singing in Unknown Tongues is a different operation of the gift of Tongues: Singing in Tongues is encouraged in 1 Corinthians 14:15, where Paul says that he will "pray with the spirit . . . and sing with the spirit".

**Ephesians 5:19** also encourages the believer to sing "spiritual songs" or songs of the spirit. These songs included singing in unknown tongues, as well as the believer's own language.

**Colossians 3:16** refers to spiritual songs again, this time teaching and admonishing "one another". So there can also be a corporate manifestation of singing together in the gift of unknown tongues, in worship and adoration of God.

4. Praying in Tongues is a means to praying the perfect prayer.

**1 Corinthians 14:17** says that those who pray in an unknown tongue give thanks well.

**Romans 8:26- 27** says that "the Spirit helps our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought. The Spirit makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God". Praying in unknown tongues causes us to pray according to the will of God. We can pray for needs unknown to us by our natural understanding as the Holy Spirit leads us.

5 In verse 39, Paul gives the advice "Forbid not to speak with tongues" and in verse 18 "I thank God that I speak in tongues more than ye all". It is important that speaking in unknown tongues frequently be a part of the believer's worship experience.

Many of these verses of scripture encourage the individual spirit-filled believer of the benefit of using (speaking) with unknown "Tongues". This personal spiritual gift is used in our worship; in praise to God and our personal edification and strengthening.

## **B. USE OF TONGUES AS A PUBLIC GIFT IN THE BODY OF CHRIST:**

The gift of Speaking in Tongues needs to be used with the gift of Interpretation in a corporate worship service. This enables the whole congregation to be blessed and edified. A message in tongues could not be understood without the gift of interpretation. This is a wonderful example of the gifts of the Holy Spirit interacting and working together to profit the body of Christ.

**1 Corinthians 12:30.** Paul’s questions, “Do all speak with tongues?” and “Do all interpret?” are asked as he introduces the use of the gift of Tongues as a ministry in the worship of the Church. One who regularly uses the gift of Tongues in the congregation would have a ministry in the gift of Tongues. To develop this ministry, time needs to be given to private praying inclusive of the use of speaking in tongues.

**1 Corinthians 14:13-19.** The believer who speaks in the unknown tongues in the congregation as a ministry needs to pray that he may also use the gift of Interpretation to express what the Holy Spirit is saying to the congregation. Note that it is the responsibility of the one who speaks in tongues to interpret his message. This is necessary so that the understanding of others can be fruitful, and all can agree with the interpretation. However, another person with the gift of Interpretation may also be used to interpret the tongues. This is the usual and indeed the accepted method used to interpret a message given in tongues. (See paragraph 2 (Interpretation of tongues))

The edification of the whole church occurs when the gift of the Speaking in Tongues is used with the Interpretation.

**1 Corinthians 14:27-28.** Paul gives guidelines for the proper use of the gift of Tongues in the church. He says that there needs to be one who can move in the gift of Interpretation.

#### **1. THE GIFT OF INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES.**

1. It has been explained earlier that the gift of Interpretation of Tongues is used with the gift of Tongues operating in the church. This gift may be exercised by anyone who wants to speak in tongues as a gift in the midst of the congregation. In practice, this is what usually occurs. If a believer operates the gift of Interpretation, he is also usually operating the gift of Tongues.

2. The person who gives an Interpretation of Tongues may be different to the person who speaks out in the gift of Tongues. If there is no interpreter, then the gift of Tongues should not be used, as it does not edify the church – not because it is a false gift!

3. The gift of Interpretation is not a gift of translation. There is a difference. The interpreter is giving the essence of the gift of Tongues, and different believers may express this differently. Several believers may be aware that they have the interpretation to a message in Tongues. When one gives the interpretation it will not be a word for word interpretation that the other person would have spoken, although the essence of the message may be similar in character.

#### **SPEAKING IN TONGUES, AND INTERPRETING AS A MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH:**

1. The believer needs to speak with at least as high an anointing as is flowing in the meeting. If the praise is high, and the believer gives the message in a soft, indecisive voice, the anointing of the meeting is lowered. The general rule is that the church is to be edified, moving from anointing to anointing.
2. Do not continue speaking on and on so as to lose the unction of the Spirit. Stop speaking as soon as the anointing decreases.
3. Choose a suitable pause in the service to speak: e.g. after praise and worship or after a song.
4. DO NOT try to give a message in tongues in the midst of high praises, in the middle of a song, or in the middle of a sermon.
5. Remember to use all gifts to strengthen or edify the body of believers.

## **2. THE GIFT OF PROPHECY 9 1 CORINTHIANS 12:10)**

1. It has been said that the gift of Tongues and the gift of Interpretation together equal the ministry of the gift of Prophecy in the Church. A prophecy comes directly from God through one believer. The gift of prophecy is to be desired above the gift of Tongues used with the gift of Interpretation because of the greater edification of the Church (1 Corinthians 14:5)
2. The Manifestation of the gift of Prophecy in a believer's life is linked to a strong desire to prophecy. The Holy Spirit through Paul says to desire, to covet to prophesy (1 Corinthians 14:29). In other words, we need to have an intense desire, zeal to prophesy, and not to be lukewarm in the operation of this wonderful gift of the Holy Spirit.
3. The gift of Prophecy is another very valuable gift for the edification of the Church. **1 Corinthians 14:4** states, "He that prophesieth edifieth the church." This edification of the church was a major concern to Paul as demonstrated in these chapters on the use of the gifts of the Spirit. In fact, the Scripture states not to quench the Spirit, and not to despise prophesying (1 Thessalonians 5:19-20). We are therefore instructed not to quench the operation of the gifts of the Spirit.
4. To operate the gift of prophecy effectively, our lives need to be surrendered and be as clean vessels before the Lord. Note the verse in 2 Peter 1:21; the emphasis is on "holy men of God". Prophesying without a surrendered life before the Lord will ultimately bring the gift into disrepute.

5. God uses the gift of prophecy to speak to the heart and soul of mankind. There is a gushing forth of words as the one prophesying is flowing under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. “Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” (John 7:38). Prophecies that are written out for future reference, or handed to an individual, lack this directness from God. Also in writing out the prophecy, there is a greater danger of the prophet incorporating his own ideas, or “refining” the flow of the Holy Spirit, even unintentionally. The anointed flowing at the time of the operation of the prophetic gift enables a greater impartation to those receiving the prophecy, and helps to increase the level of faith.

5. Historically, prophecy has operated as an oral gift. Most of the prophets spoke the messages from the Lord. There is a record in 2 Chronicles 21:12 of a prophecy given by Elijah to King Jehoram, recorded but not delivered to the king until after Elijah’s translation. In this instance the prophecy was given in written form “writing”, due to the fact that Elijah was translated before a face to face encounter was possible.

2 CHR 21:12 And **there came a writing** to him from Elijah the prophet, saying, Thus saith the LORD God.

NOTE\* This was not and will never be the normal presentation of a prophecy. Prophecy should always be spoken before spiritual leaders who can judge the validity of the spoken message.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF BIBLE PROPHECY

### 1. **Prophecy is to edify the body of Christ.**

There is to be a building up of the body in the Holy Spirit through a prophetic utterance. The one prophesying may refer to or use scriptures relevant to the particular need of the body, in the course of giving the prophecy. (1 Corinthians 14:3).

### 2. **Prophecy should exhort the body of believers.**

One of the major characteristics of prophecy is the strong element of faith. At least a portion of many prophecies will be exhortation of the body or the individual believer to greater levels of faith. In this exhortation, there may be phrases such as “If you will, then I will...” In other words, the Lord is exhorting the believer to take certain actions, which will lead to an increase of the power of the Lord in the life of the believer. Much of this type of prophecy is conditional on the believer walking in the steps that the Lord encourages in the prophetic utterance. Slothfulness may be dealt with when the prophecy is considered as a word from the Lord.

### 3. **Prophecy is like a trumpet call to the church.**

Prophecy should give a clear, precise message in words that are easily understood. If there is to be a response to the prophecy, it should be clearly understood by the church.

**4. Prophecy may initiate revelation, although most times it confirms what is in the heart.**

**Luke 2:11-20.** When the angel gave the prophecy of the birth of John the Baptist to Zechariah, he had trouble receiving the wonder news, and was dumb till John's birth.

**In Acts 13:2,** The Holy Ghost said "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them". The Holy Spirit initiated the beginning of the missionary work of Barnabas and Saul. The disciples obeyed the direction given by the Holy Ghost.

**Acts 15:28** gives a confirmation of the Holy Ghost of the decisions taken by the apostles.

**5. Prophecy serves particularly for believers in edification, exhortation, and comfort.**

Prophecy most often serves to benefit believers. However, if an unbeliever comes into the assembly and a pertinent prophecy is given, he may understand that the secrets of his heart are opened before God. This can promote repentance and stimulate true worship of God. (1 Corinthians 14:25)

**GIVING A PROPHECY IN THE CHURCH:**

Many of the same guidelines to prophesy apply to the gifts of tongues and interpretation of tongues. Flow with at least as high an anointing as in the meeting, wait until there is a pause in the high praises or singing, and do not interrupt a sermon.

1. Always speak decisively, giving a distinct, clear message. Any message given in or uncertain overtones with personal burdens or interest is never a word from the throne of God. Avoid deep theological statements.

**A prophecy is what God is saying at this moment to a particular body of believers**

(1 Corinthians 14:7-9)

2. We should be prepared to prefix our utterance: "Thus saith the Lord..." which defines and clarifies that the prophecy is not a message from the person speaking the prophecy. We prophesy according to the level of faith God has given us. (Romans 12:6). See Acts 21:11, where Agabus prefaced his prophecy with, "Thus saith the Holy Ghost..."

3 Seek to excel to the edifying of the church. Your prophetic utterances should be instructive, with good anointing, flowing with the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 14:12).

4. Prophecy may reveal secrets of the heart, in order to bring repentance and worship of God. It is very important to notice that God is always gracious in the recipient. He speaks, and He is able to make His voice clear to individuals through key phrases and without embarrassment or judgment (1 Corinthians 14:24-25)

5. Every person is given the opportunity to prophesy. However, in practical application, two or three persons usually give prophecy. However, be aware that a longer prophecy may be divided up into several segments, given by different individuals. One prophetic topic may require two or three persons to deliver the entire message. One person may not receive all the revelation. This presentation by several persons can make the message comprehensively understood by the members of the church. (1 Corinthians 14:29-30).

6. Do not feel you must give a prophecy when you feel the prophetic anointing. Several people operating the gift of prophecy may receive similar prophecies during the same service. All the prophecies need not be given. Use discretion. Your prophetic message may simply confirm the prophecy flowing from another individual.

7. Always remember: the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophet (1 Corinthians 14:32). This indicates to the body of Christ a definite responsibility in speaking forth a prophetic message. The one prophesying needs to be under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. As mentioned previously, every prophecy does not have to be uttered. The one desiring to prophesy has complete control of his spirit. The scripture clearly indicates that all is to be done for the edification of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 14:12). For instance it may be inappropriate to give a prophetic utterance because the service has moved on, i.e. the preaching of the word has begun, or the subject or mood of the meeting has changed.

8. The prophetic utterance should be given in the body of believers, so that all may hear and discern. Paul states in (1 Corinthians 14:29), “Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.” The listeners should discern and receive personally that which particularly concerns each listener.

9. A personal prophecy will contain key elements –

- a. A relevant phrase or word, so that the person knows that God is speaking.
- b. Words of wisdom and comfort meaningful to the person.
- c. An exhortation of that which lies ahead in the future.

## **KEYS TO RECEIVING A PROPHECY:**

1. Receive the prophetic word with faith.

Sometimes the ongoing nature of prophecy seems so remote that the person may, without the spirit of faith, reject it totally. But if the gift of Prophecy is really flowing through an anointed, clean vessel, God may reveal His plan for an individual life, or for a congregation.

2. We must be aware that the time element of prophecy may be for the future. Do not condemn the prophecy as false because of this. A prophecy given flowing in the anointing of the Holy Spirit will come to pass in due time.

3. The prophecy may contain words such as “If you will...then I will...” i.e. there is a condition of the Lord requiring something from the person so that He may perform what He desires. In other words we need to co-operate with God as He works in our lives. Many times the Lord asks for faith in Him to enable Him to do what He is revealing in the prophecy.

4. We need to listen carefully to all God says to us in a prophetic utterance. Then begin to do what He has revealed. We take the practical steps and believe God to work His miraculous work for our lives. I.e. He may speak of travelling to minister for Him – then we do need that passport, as a prerequisite to make ourselves ready for service.

5. Let us realize that it is God the Holy Spirit speaking to us in this wonderful gift, and we need the admonition of 1 Thessalonians 5:19-20 in our hearts – Quench not, nor despise the Spirit in the operation of this gift.

## **PROPHETIC SINGING**

This is a variation of the operation of the gift of Prophecy. There is a great history of prophetic singing in the Bible. Prophetic singing is used in praise, worship and revelation.

### **1. Times of Victory:**

Exodus 15:1 begins as a victory song, then moves into prophetic revelation: v11 – “Who is like unto Thee, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?”

### **2. Many of the great prophets sang their prophecies:**

Isaiah 5:1 The Song of the Vineyard.

Isaiah 48:10: “Declare with the voice of singing” – contains the promise of the ultimate redemption of Israel.

2 Samuel 23:2 David was known as the “sweet psalmist of Israel”.

### **3. Many of the psalms are primarily prophetic but were given as songs:**

Psalms 22 – the Messiah’s death.

### **4. The New Song:**

This is our personal singing to the Lord, and has a prophetic element.

Psalms 40:3: “And he hath put a new song in my mouth”.

### **SOME EXAMPLES OF PROPHETIC UTTERANCE IN THE ACTS:**

**Acts 11:28:** “Agabus (the Prophet) signified by the Holy Spirit that there would be a great dearth throughout all the world.”

**Acts 13:8:** The Holy Spirit spoke “Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.”

**Acts 20:23:** “Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city that bonds and imprisonment await me....”

**Acts 21:4:** “disciples said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go to Jerusalem.”

**Acts 21:10-11** The **Prophecy** of Agabus to Paul, “Thus saith the Holy Ghost, so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle.”

## **II. THE GIFTS OF INSIGHT.**

### **1. WORD OF WISDOM (1 Corinthians 12:8)**

The Word of Wisdom is a spiritual gift of the Holy Spirit. The Word of Wisdom goes beyond a natural gift or understanding which can be described as a Word of Wisdom. Its origin and foundation is God. God’s wisdom always deals with eternal issues.

**Proverbs 10:7:** “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom”. There is no spiritual wisdom outside of this fear or reverence, and all wisdom rests on this foundation. In contrast to this, the wisdom of this world does not consider eternity.

**1 Corinthians 3:19:** “For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.”

**1 Corinthians 1:22:** “.... and the Greeks seek after wisdom.” Paul gave repeated warnings of the dangers of the foolish philosophies of the world not based on a fear of the Lord.

**1 Corinthians 1:20:** “...hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?” So this gift of the Spirit gives wisdom which comes from God, and is found firstly in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**1 Corinthians 1:30:** “...But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.”

## **2. 1 Corinthians 2:13: The Holy Ghost teaches the Word of Wisdom.**

**Isaiah 11:2:** The anointing on the Messiah was the “spirit of wisdom and understanding”.

**Matthew 10:19-20 ...** “take no thought how or what he shall speak; for it shall be given you in that same hour what he shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you”.

**John 14:26: The Comforter...**he shall teach you all things.....

**Luke 2:40:** Jesus grew in wisdom.

**James 1:5:** If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask God, who gives to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

## **3. The Word of Wisdom of the Holy Spirit is Irresistible.**

**Luke 21:15:** “For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.” There is no arguing with the Word of Wisdom given in a situation by the Holy Ghost. (Stephen) **Acts 6:9-10** “And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake”.

## **4. Examples of the Word of Wisdom demonstrated by the Lord Jesus Christ:**

### **Luke 20:1-8: The Authority Question:**

The Pharisees asked Jesus, “By what authority do you do these things?” Jesus responded with a Word of Wisdom, “The baptism of John, was it (the authority) from heaven, or of men?” They refused to answer, to avoid incriminating themselves, so Jesus likewise gave no answer to them.

### **Matthew 22:17-22: The Financial Question:**

The Pharisees asked Jesus, “Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?” Jesus saw that their desire was to entangle Him. He gave the wonderful answer with the Roman coin before him, “Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s and unto God the things that are God’s.” In the midst of a challenge in this world, Jesus removed Himself from a delicate political situation, and at the same time His answer gave heavenly wisdom.

### **John 8:3-11: The Adultery Question:**

The response of Jesus, “he who is without sin vast the first stone” is a Word of Wisdom. It diffused the question of applying the rigid letter of the law, which would call for an illegal stoning. His gentle answer to her, “Neither do I condemn thee – go and sin no more”, allowed the love of God to be manifested.

### **Matthew 22:23-33: The Resurrection Question:**

Jesus answered that God was the God of the living, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. No Jew could deny this truth, even the Sadducees. His answer silenced those who did not believe in the resurrection. This answer was a Word of Wisdom.

**Matthew 22:41-46: The Question – “Who is The Christ?”**

Jesus silenced the Pharisees when He taught that David whilst in the spirit called the Messiah “Lord” and yet was the Son of David. This Word of Wisdom silenced the men who were considered masters of the law. From that day, they ceased to ask Him any more questions. His wisdom was superior to those who had attained greatness. Jesus also laid the foundation for his teaching and preparation for His coming death and resurrection.

So as we yield to the Holy Spirit of God, He gives us a suitable Word of Wisdom in the various situations as the need arises. It will not be our thoughts and natural wisdom, but will be that which is absolutely suited to the situation. The Word of Wisdom is unassailable, yet it will bring the spiritual light that may be needed.

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# **THE APOSTOLIC MINISTRY**

## **APOSTLES TO THE NATIONS**

The following pages of this teaching segment have not been written in an effort to cover every aspect of the apostolic ministry. In fact many others have already covered this vast subject in greater detail. For more than thirty years I have been involved in Prophetic ministry to the nations of the world and often times noted that some servants of God on the fields of harvest had limited knowledge of the apostolic ministry and its placement in the body of Christ. In recent years many apostolic ministries have been raised up, turning the tide of ignorance into understanding as revival fires continue to spread throughout the earth. Many times these Holy Ghost fires have resulted in nationwide revivals due to the ministries of apostles being encouraged to travel and work in the fields of harvest.

## **OUR APOSTOLIC ROOTS**

The scripture tells us in Hebrews 3:1 that Christ Jesus is the Apostle and High Priest of our profession (confession). When we consider Jesus Christ, let's consider him as "THE APOSTLE". Because Jesus Christ was the spotless Lamb of God, this placed Him above every apostle past, present or future in position and ability. He is "The Apostle" that sits on the right hand of God.

The Bible says, "when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son". (Galatians 4:4) A study of the life of Jesus Christ reveals that our First Apostle did not decide personally that He was going to work for God. The scripture says that God sent forth His Son at an appointed time to do the work of His Father. Thus the apostolic calling has its roots and foundation in our Lord Jesus Christ.

The word for "Apostle" in the Greek language is "apostolos." The meaning is "one sent forth". It is imperative that we see that Jesus was God's representative sent forth of God from His holy habitation. (John 20:21) "Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: AS MY FATHER HATH SENT ME, EVEN SO SEND I YOU. God is an ever giving, ever outreaching God. To outreach to the world, God sent Jesus His Son and Heir. As soon as Jesus had obtained the favour of men and was established in His ministry, He selected twelve men and began to disciple them into a governmental team. When certain seasons of training were fulfilled, Jesus sent forth His prepared disciples (the apostles of the LAMB), two by two (Mark 6:7). These disciples (the twelve apostles) were primarily gifted by the impartation of Christ's anointing and gifting. They were special apostles in that they were eyewitnesses of the life of Christ: His miracle ministry, crucifixion, burial, resurrection and ascension.

(Acts 1:21-22). Their personal contact with the Son of God gave them special favour in setting down the foundation for the early church. When Judas failed in his appointment another man was chosen out of the eyewitnesses. (Acts 1:15-22) The twelve apostles of the Lamb have a special place in heaven. (Revelation 21:14) As Jesus had a special apostolic classification as the Lamb of God, so His twelve disciples come into a higher classification, God giving them an honoured place in heaven.

The next classification would be apostles like Paul and Barnabas who were responsible for laying down more of the foundation of the church that we now enjoy. Some other apostles of this era are Andronicas and Junia (Romans 16:7), Apollos (1 Corinthians 4:4-9, James the Lord's brother (Galatians 1:19), Epaphroditus (Philippians 2:25) Silvanus and especially Timotheus (1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2:6).

The final classification for apostolic ministries is our present day commissioned missionaries. Specialized trade persons always have specialized tools for their particular trade or skill. As great skills (spirit gifts) were evident in the twelve apostles, it should follow that missionaries and other travelling itinerant ministers today have in their possession the ministerial equipment, namely gifts of the Holy Spirit. They should be sent forth as divinely appointed and commissioned men of God; Apostles to the nations. A missionary should be one who is commissioned or called and anointed to serve as an apostle. More on this later!

Perfect timing is always in the mind of God. God desires that His anointed men be in His appointed place at His appointed time. Otherwise much of our work for God is ineffective.

## **WHO IS A MISSIONARY**

It is of interest to note that the Latin form of the Greek word "apostolos" (apostle) is the same word as missionary.

### **Does this mean that all missionaries today are apostles? Definitely not!**

It is unfortunate that today many who say they are missionaries (and are being supported as missionaries on the foreign fields of the world) are not gifted with the abilities of the Apostles of the book of Acts. (New Testament)

REV 2:2 "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them **which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:**

**The ministry of an Apostle involves the use of all nine gifts of the Holy Spirit.**

It is not my intention to prejudge missionaries who have indeed dedicated their lives to God in pursuit of doing their best as Christian workers in some of the most remote places on earth. However, one must not claim to be a missionary or an Apostle when such ministry gifts that mark such a ministry are not in operation. The Apostle Paul was called (**by the will of God**) and gifted by God to be an Apostle. (Eph 1:1; Col 1:1; 1 Cor 1:1).

Given that the Word of God makes such a strong statement in Rev 2:2, one must ask is it acceptable to call someone a missionary who:

- (i) does medical or dental work
- (ii) plays a musical instrument
- (iii) is a soloist or singer
- (iv) is a member of a drama or dance company
- (v) works as a Bible translator
- (vi) builds orphanages and cares for its children
- (vii) builds churches, bible schools or hospitals

Over the years the list has been extended and may include any that are involved in the ministry of “helps and administration.” In fact many who left family and friends to fulfill the call of God in a foreign country claimed the title of “missionary”. **However, this is not the missionary of the Bible.** As stated previously the Latin word for “apostle” could be interchanged with the word “missionary”. Unfortunately, the work done by modern day missionaries over the years has been so varied, that many believers would find it difficult to call a missionary an apostle. Of course most missionaries would never call themselves apostles, because often they do not possess the gifting of the Apostles of the New Testament. One primary factor must be stated here. If certain persons claiming to be missionaries do not believe in all of the fundamentals of Bible doctrines which include the baptism of the Holy Spirit, then those persons have in effect withdrawn themselves from the working power of the Holy Spirit. The subsequent enabling by the Holy Spirit has been rejected and the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit which give all ministers cutting edge ministry effectiveness cannot be added to the life and ministry of that missionary. Herein is our dilemma; a great gulf is fixed between the works of the modern day “Missionary” and the “Apostles” of the book of Acts. Apostles, according to the book of Acts (which states all the qualifications of the Apostle) must be in possession of great spiritual gifts. These signs, wonders and miracles that accompanied the Apostles are so often not following the ministries of missionaries. It is not possible to assimilate an Apostle working with miracle signs with a missionary who is undertaking dozens of different tasks including helps and administrations. Apostles have either been viewed as the hand picked disciples of Jesus, or men like Paul who stated they were called to be apostles and whose ministries are like those recorded in the book of Acts. Church

history records many wonderful Holy Ghost gifted apostles of faith. These apostles changed the spiritual climate of their day. Often a whole nation was swept into revival by one apostolic ministry. Some were recognized as apostles, others were not. As Hebrews Chapter 11 says, “Of whom the world was not worthy”. Some of the great men and women of faith have yet to be acknowledged. God will reward those great heroes who have been known of God.

## MINISTRY SIGNS OF APOSTLES

When we look closely at the Biblical gifting of the Apostle, we note that ordinary men were gifted with the signs of the Apostolic Office. The Bible simply says “**signs of the apostle**” (2 Corinthians 12:12). “Truly the **signs of an apostle were wrought among you** in all patience, **in signs, wonders and mighty deeds**”. The apostle Paul makes it very clear as to the work and anointing of the apostle. The apostolic ministry had signs, and these signs were evident to all people. **They (the apostles) worked the signs, the wonders and the mighty deeds.**

At one time the apostle Paul saw the need to defend his ministry. In 1 Corinthians 9:2 he says, “Am I not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord”. **The fruit of his ministry were the great numbers of mature disciples.**

This is the real missionary of the Bible. 1 Corinthians 9:1b says, “**are ye not my work in the Lord**”. This gives the true direction of the work of an apostle or missionary. The fact that new believers were discipled and established in churches gave the necessary evidences of his ministry. Paul thought of himself as a “father”. (1 Corinthians 4:15) The apostolic minister is indicative of one who is in possession of great maturity. Paul mentions his fourteen years of ministry in many regions inclusive of time in Jerusalem. (Galatians 2:1-2) **Apostolic ministries are not produced overnight.** I don’t see young men claiming to be apostles in the book of ACTS. The Apostolic ministers of the book of Acts possessed anointed signs following ministries with such maturity that they could supervise numbers of churches, increase and train numbers of pastors and evangelists and bring order to young church assemblies which were scattered in many regions without the aid of airplanes, motor vehicles, telephones and computers.

Hence, present day apostles or missionaries should possess many of the characteristics of the gifts of the prophets and teachers that were in the church at Antioch. (Acts 13:2) Apostles should at least be mature Bible teachers, possessing prophetic gifting and be able to preach with signs following. **(1 Tim 2:7; 2 Tim 1:11)** **Both these verses contain the words preacher, apostle and teacher.**

Those who are working as missionaries have the responsibility to increase the anointing which the scripture says has already been given to them. (1Jn 2:27)

By increasing the level of faith it is possible to increase ministry anointing and be sent out as apostles. (Acts 14:14-15).

**Barnabas and Saul were already working together and had a proven ministry before being sent out by the Holy Ghost.** (Acts 12:24-25).

Our churches should be full of the power and glory of God. Indeed, present day churches should have in its membership Apostolic and Prophetic ministries similar to those found in the church at Antioch where Barnabas and Saul were commissioned and sent forth. It is imperative that spirit filled ministers possessing all the gifts of the Holy Spirit are members or associates of powerful spirit filled churches. Churches given to reservation in worship, lacking zeal or following centuries of tradition in worship should be avoided by ministers or workers desiring to apprehend powerful ministries. To maintain positive forward movement all believers and ministers corporately must be freely encouraged as active participants in full gospel or Pentecostal worship services. These churches would be classified as spirit-filled churches. The church at Antioch was indeed a spirit filled church, where its members:

- (i) Waited on God in prayer,
- (ii) Lived out a fasted and separated lifestyle,
- (iii) Operated with maturity the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

**We see then that church members who actively live this dedicated lifestyle will be partakers of the greater gifts and could possibly progress to become active apostolic ministries in the nations.**

God's vision is always an outreaching forward moving vision, and His Spirit is always purposeful in His going forth. (Ezekiel 1:9,12) The church at Antioch possessed this vision. It could be said that where there is unity, prayer and fasting there is an increase of grace or gifting in the church body. When this occurs God will speak, as He did through Isaiah "Whom will I send and who will go for us?" (Isaiah 6:8) When God's vision becomes our only vision, as it was in Antioch, then our vision to reach out to the nations will not be limited. When God sees the vision of our churches change, He will search the body of Christ and find someone properly prepared with the ability to do His work and then send that person to the place of His choosing to meet the spiritual need.

There was a long season between Acts Chapter 2 (the day of Pentecost and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit) and Acts Chapter 13 where the Holy Spirit said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them" (Acts 13:2). God wants to send his people to do His work, but many times we are neither

prepared nor willing to be sent. This is the reason God does not speak. He is waiting for a change of heart. When this change of heart is evident and the Holy Spirit is overflowing in gifting in the corporate body, God will speak and send forth anointed men to do His work.

## **GREATER ANOINTING**

Often during our worship services believers have that momentary longing to become someone who ministers with signs, wonders and miracles. Then, after church, when that still awesome presence of God has subsided, the believer forgets the experience until next time. Some think there is a great distance to be travelled before the ordinary person can become an extraordinary person. The believers in Antioch by great dedication stretched themselves to believe for and apprehend the greater gifting of the Holy Spirit. They pressed toward the mark with zeal and determination and apprehended apostolic abilities in ministry to the nations.

There is something wonderful that happens when men and women determine to work for God wherever God sends them. God brings great increase into their lives whilst they are ministering. This is what happened to Saul. It was not long before others began to call him Paul. (Acts 13:9) Paul's new name was given because he became an anointed Apostle. From the time Paul pronounced blindness on the sorcerer El'ymas a great ministerial change took place. Paul immediately became known only as Paul. Saul became a man of the past. In Acts Chapter 14 we see that Paul becomes the main spokesperson, whereas previously Barnabas was apparently the leader. Both men are known as apostles, separate from the twelve chosen by Christ Jesus. (Acts 14:4,14)

It is obvious that travelling with greater ministerial responsibility and being in God's appointed place at God's appointed time enhanced his maturity.

In determining that he would work for God no matter what the outcome, Saul rapidly grew (in grace) and fulfilled the will of God for his life, by "bearing the name of Christ Jesus with suffering". (Acts 9:15-16)

Whilst all apostolic work is not the same, it does carry responsibilities for many other members of the body of Christ. (Ephesians 4:11-14). Apostles being one of the five-fold ministries are responsible for the perfecting of the saints (v12) and imparting the measure of the fullness of Christ (v13) by fulfilling an apostolic ministry, the apostle should be constantly imparting spiritual gifts to the believers, lifting them to a greater level of anointing.

. The early church was encouraged to continue in the apostle's doctrine. These

teachings included many of the things that believers today have omitted from their daily Christian lives. The early church Apostles lead by example. They met daily at the temple for prayer. They prayed every day. They lived a fasted lifestyle in which fasting became routine. Because of these simple characteristics in the lives of the apostles, miracles were an increasing occurrence not only in Jerusalem, but also in many other nations. Many in the body of Christ are longing to see greater numbers of mature apostolic ministries. Let us be found as members that tap into the power of fasting and believe God to rise up revelatory ministers who pray together, who value prophetic ministry. I believe that we are coming into a time when many churches in many nations will send gifted Apostolic and Prophetic ministries with signs following into the nations.

**Author: Rev. Lawrence Gregor**

# THE PROPHETIC MINISTRY

**Author: Rev. Lawrence Gregor**

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The prophetic mantle was not always accepted as it is today. It is no longer considered extreme for one to state that his function in the body of Christ is that of a prophet. The Bible teaches that the prophet is one of the five-fold ministries. Years ago, a minister would never state that he functioned as a prophet, because church leaders often could not accept a prophetic ministry. Church leaders thought that to state that one was a prophet was an extreme thought or that it was a statement of pride that should never be vocalized. Many times, doors of ministry were closed to any man who claimed to be a prophet.

I thank God the body of Christ has a greater acceptance today for the prophetic ministry. This acceptance has encouraged an increase in the number of specialized schools for the training of prophets in many nations.

However, there is still a tremendous need for greater understanding of both the prophet and his/her true function in the nations. Most important, people in every nation need to hear the word of the Lord. Further, ministers need to develop the capacity for the spiritual disciplines necessary for both themselves and others who desire to be used of God prophetically.

I believe that God is pleased to see the increasing numbers of men and women willing not only to apprehend the disciplines required to bring accurate prophecy, but the dedication to carry the word of the Lord to the nations.

The church of Jesus Christ is at the threshold of the eminent return of the Lord. God is equipping the church with a greater number of apostles and prophets. These ministries ultimately will prepare the bride of Christ, ready for the Bridegroom, the Christ, who is to come.

Consider what can take place in our lives when we allow God to adjust, redirect, and mature us in word and deed. We will be changed as we receive greater portions of this anointing.

As you read, may it be with a prayerful heart. Listen to God's voice. Let God challenge you to believe Him for a prophetic gifting in your life.

## **II. THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is just as important in our lives today as it was on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem. When believers are filled with the Holy Spirit, they will speak with unknown or new tongues. The tongues are the evidence of being filled with the Holy Spirit. This is the same experience the believers had on the day of Pentecost. (Acts 2) This experience brings new ability and power to our lives to serve the Lord more effectively. The tongues must accompany the experience of being in-filled to have a complete biblical infilling of the Holy Spirit. If tongues are not yet received, the infilling is not complete. When the believer is completely filled, the Holy Spirit within will overflow in new tongues.

When a believer receives the Holy Spirit baptism, he receives the power to live and work for God. The Bible says in Acts 1:8, "You shall receive power after the Holy Ghost has come upon you." On the day of Pentecost, this power was given for the purpose of serving God. "You shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, all of Judea, and the uttermost part of the earth." As it was then, so it is now. God's vision is a world vision. Jesus said, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." God often gives this larger world vision when He gives us this Holy Spirit power. This power and boldness is better expressed through the gifts of the Holy Spirit. For more information on the gifts of the Holy Spirit, please refer to our teaching manual on this subject.

The power of the Holy Spirit increases our personal capacity to work for God. Think of fitting a larger wattage light bulb to a lamp socket. The result is increased light. It is the same socket and the same source of power. The difference is the light bulb has a greater wattage capacity. Because of the increased capacity, it uses more power and produces stronger light. This capacity gives greater illumination. The darkness is reduced. This is what happens when we receive the power of the Holy Spirit. We now have the capacity to work for God in a greater way. The power of God is now flowing through us because we willingly received His Holy Spirit power. Our vessel now has the capacity for greater ability in service. As this power of the Holy Spirit is used in greater measure, so the amount of "gross darkness" of this world is dissipated by us. As we see the spiritual darkness of this world, our vision for ministry will should increase. It is God's desire to use us beyond our individual communities. We must see as God sees. God sees the entire world.

God gives the increase and we move in greater faith, step by step. As we take these steps of faith, the gifts of the Holy Spirit flow through us. As we take yet further steps, the Holy Spirit uses us in greater ways. This gives us greater effectiveness in ministry. If we refuse to accept the power of the Holy Spirit, we cripple our effectiveness. In order for God to release you in the prophetic gifting, you must be absolutely filled with the Holy Spirit. You must speak freely in new tongues, with the rivers of living water flowing out of your

innermost being. (John 7:38)

**All Holy Spirit gifts flow from this river of God.  
Prophecy being one of these gifts flows from this river.**

Prophecy is never released from our minds. **Prophecy flows from our spirit.** Simply, it is more a belly experience (Jn 7:38). When the Apostle Paul laid his hand on the disciples of John, they spoke in tongues and **prophesied**. (Acts 19:6)

**Prophecy is for all spirit filled, tongue talking believers.**

Holy Spirit baptism does not mean we speak with new tongues as a conclusion. We must realize this is just the beginning of our journey of faith. Our new tongues give us the ability to build up our inner man every day. (1 Cor 14:4a)

We must speak in tongues every day. If we do not exercise our physical bodies, we can lose physical conditioning and deteriorate physically. If we do not exercise our "new tongues", we lose our spiritual conditioning. The speaking of new tongues keeps the river of the spirit flowing in our lives. When we keep it flowing, we will never "dry up" spiritual or feel spiritually withered.

However, this power for service does not cancel the need for a lifestyle of separation from the things of the world. We are called to a life of separation. The apostles' lifestyle of separation from the things of the world became the Christian lifestyle of the early church. When we maintain our separation from the world we plug into a greater power source of His anointing in our lives.

Acts Chapter 2 reveals some of the characteristics of this lifestyle of separation from worldliness. The Apostles' doctrine of the early church was a high standard for all believers. However they continued steadfastly in "doctrine (teaching) and fellowship". (Acts 2:42)

The teachings of the word of God and fellowship with dedicated believers are two of the corner stones of our faith. If we neglect the input of God's Word and the fellowship of mature believers we remove some of the foundation stones necessary for the ongoing building of our faith.

The Christian lifestyle is reflected in the actions of the believers' lifestyle. The early church believers had a fear of God. Everyone feared the Lord. This resulted in signs and wonders. (Acts 2:43)

The apostles and those of like faith in Christ shared their possessions. This was not just a sharing of natural blessings, for they went to the temple every day to share their spiritual possessions, which were the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

We must share our anointing and gifting with the body of Christ. God desires church growth as well as personal growth. The Lord added to the church daily. (Acts 2:47)

When we study the word of God, we should endeavor to read it with the view of extracting truth that can be added to our life. The Book of Acts is more than a history of the early church. It should our textbook of church planting, missions, revival, personal growth, and impartation.

### **III. PROPHETIC HERITAGE**

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in family trees and family origins. By searching into family histories, some have found interesting records; treasured memoirs and photographs that helped link them to their heritage.

For the first time, some have received a sense of belonging, or natural bonding to their heritage. Many times men and women need the security found in knowing their natural family origins. This security is often missing for people living in westernized nations, where families move from town to town, and even from nation to nation.

#### **What would take place in our lives if we had the same interest in our biblical family tree or spiritual family origins?**

If we could trace the generations of our families, we might build a family tree extensive enough to locate prophets among our ancestors. As we are all descendants of Adam, we must conclude that the canonical prophets and New Testament apostles and prophets can be found somewhere in our family tree.

If you found a man of God in your family lineage, would this make you consider the possibility of including the “prophetic” lifestyle and anointing in your ministry?

Our modern technology may appear to give us a lifestyle far removed from Bible times. However, God says of Himself, "He changes not." The 66 books of the Bible records the lives of these anointed men and their individual characteristics.

When we study their lives realistically, we discover that our lives and passions are not different from the men of the Bible. The Bible remains our source of reliable information on how we should live, no matter what culture we live in.

#### **A. TRUE HERITAGE**

Before we study our prophetic genealogy, it is necessary to establish from the Word of God

that we are indeed the heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. (Rom 8:16-17)

We know that the Bible is the inspired word of God, and that the Bible is true.

Therefore, the lineage of the Bible is our genealogy. The Bible tells us that we are sons of God. "And if a son; then an heir of God through Christ." (Gal 4:7)

"And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Gal 3:29)

When we consecrated our lives to Christ, we had our sins forgiven. We were granted the right to eternal life in heaven. Moreover, we were grafted into the family tree of the anointed Christ. This gives us the same ability as other branches on that tree to bear much fruit. Please consider this. As we have been grafted to the anointed vine in Christ, we must seek to be His anointed branches. (Jn 15:1,4)

This is more challenging than one might think.

Having hidden this great scriptural truth within our hearts, we can continue our studies into our prophetic origins. We cannot venture into every aspect of the origins of the prophet and prophecy.

In these few pages, we cannot uncover all the human characteristics of the great men and women of the Bible. However, there is something we can do.

The author challenges the reader to believe God for a prophetic mantle. This mantle is received by faith. It must be worn with responsibility. With this mantle, the believer can expect to be greatly used of the Lord.

## **B. THE ORDERED LIFE**

The man of God or the prophet must have a life ordered by God.

Moses is one of the great prophets of the Bible. One of the reasons we should study the life and ministry of Moses is because he was greatly used of the Lord prophetically.

God gave Moses specific instructions. With God's guidance, Moses set in order the great institution of the prophetic anointing. This prophetic anointing, or mantle, has allowed men to declare the true word of the Lord down through the ages.

Under God's direction, Moses directed the people of Israel to order their lives and separate themselves from ungodliness. Moses set a standard of godliness and holiness. (Deut 18:9-

12) This ordering, or restructuring, of lifestyle ensured that the people could clearly hear God's word without interference. God set a standard of behavior for the people of God. God required that the people put away all abominations so that they could clearly hear God's voice.

Sensitivity to the voice of God comes only when we order and discipline our lives.

God desires the same standard today. This standard of godliness guarantees that the people hear the true word of the Lord. (Deut 18:9-12)

Moses commanded Israel to separate themselves from those who practiced divination and spiritism. God never gave a reason for this separation, but it is evident that God desires His children to accurately hear the word of the Lord.

As a jealous God, He is only interested in our welfare. God's always gives his children the opportunity to hear His voice with clarity.

Moses had to order his life in God's way and submit his life to God before God finally was able to convince Moses that he could use him as a vessel. The difficulties that one finds in one's life cannot and must not be used as excuses to avoid serving God in greater ways.

Moses was an astounding and unusual prophet. A character study of the life of Moses reveals many things that he endured before being called and anointed to serve God. He encountered difficulties, frustrations, personal anger, and even murder. He was separated from his brethren and home land. Moses constantly battled a speech impediment.

The prophet Elisha lived with and served an older prophet, Elijah. This experience gave the younger man first hand knowledge of the disciplines of the lifestyle of the prophetic ministry. In contrast, there is no record of Moses ever being tutored by a prophet. Moses had no peers with whom he could fellowship on this **level of anointing**. Moses learned directly from God.

It was Moses' personal relationship with God that enabled him to know what God wanted and expected from God's people. God used the life and ministry of Moses to give us a model for future prophetic character and ministry. (Deut 18:20)

God requires of His people a high standard of conduct. See Deuteronomy chapter 18. "Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God." (Deut 18:13)

**God's ways are perfect.** (2 Sam 22:31)

**God's work is perfect.** (Deut 32:4)

Some would say that this standard as required by God is not possible. However, this high standard is possible through Christ. When we receive Christ, we receive the holiness and perfection of God into our lives. If we walk with the Lord and abide in Him, we remain perfect "in Christ". (1 Jn 3:5-6)

Jesus Christ is our "**Prophetic Perfect**".

Jesus expects us to be perfect. (Matt 5:48).

To follow Christ, we must separate ourselves from the worldliness of our former ways. Denial of self is the pathway to true separation.

Separation always brings perfection into the lives of God's people. God demands separation from all things pertaining to this world. To straddle the fence with one foot in our old worldly lifestyle and one foot in our new way of life in Christ Jesus restricts the believer to a life of spiritual frustration.

**If we are to be used as a mouthpiece for God, separation from the world is not optional. It is absolutely imperative. (Tit 2:12; 1 Jn 2:15-17) This separation is a commitment to discipline.**

Self discipline goes against our flesh. Human nature does not like discipline. With discipline, we can maintain the separation necessary to be an effective vessel. We will not be effective in the fields of harvest if we fail to discipline our flesh.

The word of God is revelation from God. Revelation from God ultimately brings blessing and liberty. Other sources of revelation found in this world bring death and bondage.

Many of the Bible's characters lived according to the spoken word of God. It is important for us to realize the place of God's spoken word in our lives. The people of the Bible spoke the prophetic word and then lived out that word in obedience to God. We as spirit filled believers must do the same.

The Bible is filled with prophecy. Much of the Old Testament speaks of the Messiah to come. Jesus was born in fulfillment of many prophecies to become our **Prophetic Messiah**. (Deut 18:15)

This prophetic foundation must be viewed as the believer's prophetic heritage. Once we are absolutely convinced of this fact, the phrase "household of God" will become more personal to us. "Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the

saints, and of the household of God." (Eph 2:19-22)

Remember, prophetic ministry is more than simply being a mouthpiece for the Lord. When we truly believe we are citizens of the household of God we will seek to be yielded vessels. We will only desire to speak His words and be pleasing to Him.

To maintain a depth in the prophetic and to flow in revelation, we must live a separated and holy lifestyle.

Memorize Ephesians 2:20: **"And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone."**

### **C. PROPHETIC UNCTION**

PROPHETIC UNCTION PRECEDES PROPHETIC FUNCTION.  
WITHOUT PROPHETIC FUNCTION, THERE IS NO PROPHETIC UNCTION.

It is imperative that we understand that this foundational faith and prophetic unction is part of our spiritual heritage. We have a right to believe God for prophetic gifting ourselves.

There were prophets before Moses. The Bible contains examples of many prophets. Following are a few examples of the prophets of the Old Testament, before and after Moses. These prophets were greatly used of God.

Enoch foretold the coming of the Lord with ten thousand saints. (Jude 14)

Noah prophesied about the worldwide flood. (Heb 11:7)

Abraham was "the believing prophet of God". Gen 20:7; 18:22b)

Isaac, "the child of promise", walked with God and enjoyed the same blessings as Abraham.

Jacob "wrestled" for the blessing, and saw the face of God. (Gen 32: 24-30)

Joseph was "the dreamer" who, despite great trials, lived the "separated life." (Gen 39:24-30)

Miriam was a prophetess of renown. (Ex 15:20)

Deborah prophesied. She judged Israel. (Jud 4:4)

It appears that from the time of Moses to the time of Samuel, the prophetic word became inactive. (1 Sam 3:1) This scripture shows us that God did not speak very often. The Bible says that the word was precious. In other words, it was very rare, like gold.

In the eleventh century B.C., Samuel emerged as a great prophet. Samuel attacked the shriveled spiritual state of the land of Israel as he operated as a prophet. During his ministry, Samuel realized the way to change the spiritual environment of the land was by training young men for the ministry. Samuel's **Prophetic Preparatory Schools** were responsible for the revival of the prophetic voice in Israel.

When we read II Kings 2, we learn about the sons of the prophets. The sons of the prophets received tremendous disciplines from the ministry of Samuel. These men received great gifting of "spiritual knowledge".

In II Kings 2, Elisha received the mantle of power from Elijah as the elder prophet was taken up to heaven by a whirlwind. When we read these accounts of God's ability to work through men, the zeal of God should burn within us. Our souls should cry out for more of the fire of God.

We must seek God for the greater ascension gifts that come with the Holy Spirit. We need these ascension ministry gifts that we may:-

- a) Affectively reap the increasing harvest;
- b) To impart the fire and power of God into the body of Christ.

#### **IV. THE PROPHETIC OFFICE**

The prophet is one of the five-fold ministries. (Eph 4:11-12) This ministry is often confused with the gift of prophecy. The Old Testament shows us that prophets or seers had great abilities in receiving a message from God. These messages contained tremendous revelation often accompanied with descriptive visions. When God gives vision, He is giving revelation to the believer. When Samuel first heard God speak he didn't know it was God, but as he heard the voice of God more and more and received greater revelation and experience God established him as a prophet. The greater the incoming flow of revelation into the Prophet's spirit, the greater the outflow of prophecy. Prophets should possess a flow of revelation, in word and vision. Prophecy spoken to the body of Christ does not necessarily need revelation to edify, exhort and comfort. (1 Cor 14:3) A true Prophet should have many other gifts of the Spirit in operation in his ministry. Prophecy is only one of these gifts. We should desire gifts, including prophecy. (1 Cor 14:1) "...but rather that ye may prophesy"

Paul is saying he would rather a seeking for the prophetic gifting. He said this much stronger in (1 Cor 14:39) "Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy." In other words, don't just think about it...no need to pray it through, just take it. However, he also teaches that having received the release to prophesy will not make a person a Prophet.

"Are all Prophets?" (1 Cor 12:29)

Prophecy will never make a tongue talking believer a Prophet.

However a Prophet will always have the availability of the prophetic word ready to be delivered in power. Remember, that the Prophet will have other revelation gifts operating, such as, the word of knowledge and word of wisdom. Note the Prophet Agabus. (Acts 21:10-11)

#### **V. THE PROPHETIC MANTLE**

Let us consider that the anointing of the Lord is the mantle of the Lord to every believer. In essence, the mantle given to us is "the anointing".

The Bible reveals that specific anointing and gifting were given to men and women to lead others into their spiritual destinies. (Matt 3:1-6) (Luke 4:14,17-19)

**1 John 2:20 reveals that all spirit-filled believers have received anointing.** Anointing or unction is already abiding in the life of the believer "who abides in Him.

Read 1 John 2:27. "The anointing".... abideth in you.... ye shall abide in Him, to maintain

the level of anointing.

Prophetic anointing is also maintained by "abiding in Christ." Consider the aspects of abiding in Christ. (John 14:16; 15:3-10)

God's desire is that all of God's people prophesy. (Num 11:29)

Every spirit filled believer has the capacity to be used of God in prophecy. (1 Cor 14:5) **But rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth."**

One of the ways that the prophetic anointing or gifting comes to us is by impartation. This is certainly one way to receive an anointed prophetic ability. (Acts 19:6)

The prophetic anointing is used to edify, exhort and comfort. Further, it is also used to bring impartation of prophetic gifting to others. (Acts 13:2)

Is it necessary that we prophesy? Read again 1 Cor 14:5. Is it necessary? Yes, more than necessary. It is imperative that we prophesy. The word of the Lord must be heard in the church.

Church leaders should be conscious of what God is doing and "saying". **Shepherds and other five-fold ministers must lead the sheep according to the word of the Lord.** This maturity gives sure direction in the services. God desires we respond to His voice. (Job 14:14-15)

Waiting on the Lord brings strength of heart. (Ps 27:14)

The local church should encourage and make provision for the operation of the gift of prophecy in most meetings. It is better to wait, in order to hear the prophetic word of the Lord.

Consider now Amos 3:7. "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets."

**If our desire is to be used of God in greater ways, the prophetic anointing is not optional. We must have it for effective ministry. It is our "cutting edge".**

Remember, the canonical prophets and New Testament apostles and prophets were men like you and me. Remember that "in Christ", we are related to this anointing. We are related by reason of our prophetic heritage.

**WE HAVE RECEIVED UNCTION FOR FUNCTION.**

This means that we have received the anointing, or the **unction** of the Holy Spirit, so that

we may perform and **function** in the body of Christ, according to our gifting and level of faith.

**AS BELIEVERS WE HAVE A PROPHETIC HERITAGE.**

See Matt 1:1, Rom 8:16-17 Gal 3:9, and 1 Jn 3:1-3.

In Christ we are grafted to the anointed vine. (Jn 15:1,4)

When we are born again we were received into the family of the anointing. Christ, the anointed one, is the head and we are the body. Every body member has a voice.

**If we yield our voice to His voice, our voice will become His voice.**

The Master's voice is the voice we should both wait for and obey.

Many times, the prophetic voice lacks penetration because it lacks prophetic anointing. This will mean an ineffective outcome to the function of the prophetic gift. Ineffective prophetic function can be cured. Long periods of fasting will strengthen and anoint the voice.

Other hindrances include unbelief, prayerlessness, pride, a gluttonous lifestyle, laziness, timidity, and unbelief. No, this is not a misprint, for **unbelief** is always our greatest hindrance and needs to be emphasised. See John 6:28-29.

God often uses prophecy to bring growth and change into the church.

(1 Cor 14:4,12)

## **VI. THE PROPHET'S FUNCTION**

The Hebrew noun for prophet is "nabhi", or "spokesman" or "speaker". The verb is "nabha", which means "to prophesy", or "to flow, boil up, bubble forth or "to pour forth words".

Exodus 7:1-2 clarifies the Hebrew meaning as, "one who speaks for God".

So the function of the prophet is to speak forth a divine message from God's river.

**"A message from God coming up from the prophet's innermost being."**

(Jer 1:7, 15:19, Zech 7:12, Amos 3:8, and Eze 2:7-8)

**Your voice can be God's voice.**

God's word came to Zechariah by the spirit of God. (Zech 7:12)

Our spirit needs to be married to His spirit. This means permanent relationship, by abiding

in the vine. (Jn 15:4-5)

**If you drink of His wine, you will abide in the vine.**

Amos was so committed to the Lord that his voice could not be restrained.

God's voice roared as a lion. (Amos 1:2; 3:8) This roaring of the voice of God, was in the spirit of Amos. He had to prophesy, as God was speaking into his spirit. When God spoke, Amos spoke.

The prophets spoke the word which God had given them. These messages were spoken with **power and conviction.**

The most noted characteristic of the prophet's voice is that his voice must be heard clearly. **This voice is a strong, lifted voice. A mature prophetic voice possesses conviction.** (Isa 13:2)

The prophetic voice is a voice crying to the people. Jonah cried against Ninevah. (Jon 3:4)

Jesus cried with a loud voice. (John 7:37)

David's conviction came from a longing to witness the power and glory of God. (Ps 63: 1-3)

There is a certain sound to the **anointed voice.** You can hear a unique sound in the voice which is anointed of God.

Many have heard the sound of the anointing.

This sound is heard not only in our ears, but in our spirit.

## **VII. INSPIRATION AND REVELATION**

### **A. INSPIRATION**

**One of the great characteristics of the prophetic is the ability to receive a divine communication.**

The Old Testament "seer" had a receptive and perceptive ability.

"Seer" means a person who sees with visionary insight.

The "prophet" and the prophetic ministry also give us **the communicative function** in the

church. Both aspects of the prophetic ministry, perception and speaking, are equally important in the life of the man or woman of God and should be considered inseparable.

Ezekiel recorded this visionary ability. See Eze 1:4,15,28; 2:1,2; 37:1. Note the reality of Ezekiel's vision. He is carried out in the spirit.

Was this carrying away "literary" or "literal"?

According to the depth of the vision, a person can feel he is (momentarily or physically) in another place.

### **Prophetic ministers must “speak” what they "see".**

The “Tanakh” describes Ezekial’s experience this way. "He took me out by the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the valley."

As vessels we must carry “light” to be able to reveal “revelation”. If there is no light, we cannot see. With the light of God, we can see. This light, or revelation, from God brings the new life of His Spirit into our spirits. The life in our spirits brings life to the people.

Both inspiration and revelation is God given.

This inspiration gives us understanding. (Job 32:8)

The Hebrew text, the Tanakh, for this verse in Job states, "But truly it is the spirit in men, the breath of Shaddai, that gives them understanding. "Shaddai" is God Almighty.

Such illumination, understanding or wisdom from God is given to those living in close relationship with God.

**If we have a close relationship with God, we will have inspiration. Those who have a weak relationship to God possess very little inspiration.**

God loves inspiration. His every word is by inspiration.

(2 Tim 3:16)

## **B. REVELATION**

Revelation from God follows in a parallel form to inspiration from God.

Visions, dreams, interpretation, sensing or knowledge by the Holy Spirit are directive words from God. These are forms of heavenly revelation.

We must be sensitive to his Holy Spirit in order to receive God's message of revelation in the form in which God sends it. This message can be a sensing, a signal, a vision, a prompting, a still small voice or even a roaring in our spirit. You may be blessed to hear an audible voice.

Many times what we sense, is of the Lord. God uses our spirit senses, to get the message to us. Our response to the Holy Spirit "sensings" must be positive in order that God can give us greater sensitivity to revelatory prompting.

Response times of the believer vary according to sensitivity and levels of faith.

When we wait for a vision, believe to see in vision.

When you see in vision, speak what you see. This gives potency to a prophecy and helps the recipient know that God is really speaking to them personally.

The prophets of old spoke prophetically as they saw the vision. As our response to the sensing of the spirit develops and matures so does our ability to prophesy what we are seeing. To prophetically speak what we are seeing is more powerful than to vocalize what we have seen. If God is revealing, then this revelation should be prophesied as the "word of the Lord".

### C. **FASTING**

One important method by which to increase our sensitivity to the Holy Spirit is to begin and maintain a **fasting lifestyle**.

As those who determine to be a mouthpiece for the Lord, we must fast at least **one day each week**. Fasting simply means that we give up eating food for a certain time.

This moderate fasting lifestyle often brings "the release" of the prophetic voice in our lives. The prophet Daniel lived a moderate lifestyle. He was moderate in what he ate, because he was determined to be used of God. Fasting gave Daniel a "state of readiness".

The Bible says that Daniel and his friends were ten times better than all the magicians.

Please note that Daniel did not engage in a total fast. He and his godly brothers fasted on pulse (vegetables grown from seeds) and water. This form of fasting was enough to sharpen Daniel and his friends in spirit. God gave them knowledge, wisdom and understanding in all visions and dreams. (Dan 1:17-19)

**The more we fast, the more the anointed word of God will flow from our mouths.**

## **VIII. THE TRUE PROPHET**

The greater desire we have to be used of God in the realm of the prophetic, the more we will battle the enemy.

Prophets in training can be targeted by the devil with unbelieving thoughts to discourage them from prophesying. The enemy may use such thoughts as:

"What if people think I am a false prophet?"

"Will the words I speak come to pass?"

"How can I be sure it is God speaking?"

Many have experienced these thoughts from time to time.

**These thoughts must be rejected forever!**

If we look at the Old Testament, we can find a method of testing true and false prophecies. It is true that even false prophets performed authentic signs and wonders.

2 Thess 2:9, Rev 13:13-15. We must receive our instructions from God at all times. If a prophet does not listen to God, he may be lead astray by man.

God will judge the disobedience of the prophet, not necessarily the man who deceives him. (1 Kings 13)

The true prophets of the Old Testament received revelation from God by way of dreams and visions. (Num 12:6)

Remember that many times dreams and visions come with greater regularity when we practice **a fasting lifestyle**.

I believe that when we live the separated, fasting lifestyle, we will bring **a sure accurate word** to the body of Christ.

**This life of separation from the world and dedication to God is one of the master keys to prophetic unction and function.**

The true prophets are personally called of God to this office. (Ex 4:10-12; Jer 1:4-10).

Amos 7:14-15 Amos tells us he was just an ordinary person, when God called him into the prophetic ministry. Just like Amos, we all start out as working men and women. Then God anoints the vessel and we become prophets and prophetesses.

The false prophets prophesied out of their own hearts and were often given to lying divination. (Ezk 13:1-11)

False prophets often had low morality and poor character which was revealed in their

actions. (Micah 3:5,11; Isa 28:7; Jer 23:11)

**True prophets** never whitewash sins or allow worldly trends to cloud or cover the truth of God. **Truth must be revealed, then spoken.**

The prophetic ministry often comes under criticism. The prophet/prophetess or person with a prophetic unction must purpose to carry his/her "cross of courage."

Prophetic ministries with a proven anointing may be misunderstood from time to time. However, they must make the commitment to remain anointed and be used of God prophetically, even in weakness and persecution. (2 Cor 4:8-10)

One of the easiest ways to gain knowledge of the prophetic ministry is to sit under the ministry of a prophet of God. Listen carefully as he ministers before the people. Take note of the God given phrases, and listen to the strength of the anointed prophetic word.

Of course, you must use your own prophetic gifting. The more you exercise your own prophetic gift in church services and prayer meetings, the more revelation will flow from the Lord.

**No exercise, no strength. No use, no anointing.**

Covet to prophesy! 1 Cor 14:39.

**The more revelation that passes through the vessel, the more anointing is entrusted to the vessel.**

Finally, the prophet is subject to the prophet. This method of judgment is our **safety net**. We should always be subject one to the other. This subjection is necessary even with prophets of renown.

## **IX. PROPHETIC UTTERANCE**

Old Testament prophets were used of God in various ways. Some used spoken prediction, such as Hananiah's death. (Jer 28:15-17) (1 Kin 13:1-6).

Others employed parables, such as the poor man's ewe lamb. (2 Sam 12:1-14)

Allegory has been used as prophetic utterance, such as the "foundling child". See Eze 16:3-14. Ezekiel Chapter 16 contains some of the most picturesque language spoken

prophetically in the Bible.

The Old Testament prophets possessed various prophetic gifts. They used every kind of personification, figure of speech, simile, and metaphor. (Isa 10:5; Jer 51:20; Isa 41:15)

Many times as the prophetic word is coming forth, we also will speak in unusual descriptive ways.

This type of language was typical during 700 B.C. but is not used as often today. We need to study and learn the ways that God wants to use us most effectively in our day.

Many have asked the question, "Do we need to use 'thees' and 'thous' when we prophesy?" The answer is "no". Remember that when we read the Authorized King James Version of the Bible, we take on the phraseology of that text into our mind and spirit. The author is not concerned with old time prophetic phraseology as much as reading and ministering from a cutting edge version of the Word of God. I believe that the Authorized King James Version is one of those anointed versions. The more we read the Word of God the more it fills our life. So when we speak, we speak in the language we read and love.

When God spoke (see Isa 55:11), His word did not return to Him void or empty. You will notice that His word fulfilled its purpose and prospered. (Isa 46:10)

The word of the Lord spoken in faith and power (the unction of the Spirit of God) (1Cor 2:4,5) in the body of Christ **will not return void**. The word will bring spirit prosperity and blessing, there will be new life in the body of Christ.

God wants to demonstrate the power of the prophetic word.

Memorize Isa 55:11 and 1 Cor 2:4-5.

Note the power of the spoken words of God.

## **X. PROPHETIC RELEASE**

The Word of God has clearly revealed that all believers receive an anointing in Christ. (2 Cor 1:20-22)

So the capacity for the release of the prophetic is already within us. To activate any gift of the Holy Spirit, it is necessary to have a close relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ. This is always enhanced by our prayer life and the amount of time we spend with the Lord. Remember, fasting can often be the secret to the release of the gift. We need a close relationship or walk with the Lord first and foremost.

Question? What will bring us into a more meaningful relationship to the Lord?

Answer: Prayer and fasting, reading the Word of God, coupled with meditation and the attendance of anointed meetings where the word of God is preached with power.

This lifestyle of relationship with Jesus causes our faith to arise. When our faith levels rise, we can then launch into our prophetic gifting. We must make decisions to speak prophetically before the people. Take courage and then take a step of faith.

**The power and anointing of Christ Jesus is ready to flow through you.**

(1 Cor 2:4)

We have to be willing to fulfill scripture. (Joel 2:28)

**We can be one of the sons and daughters that prophesied.** Jesus fulfilled scripture. John the Baptist fulfilled scripture. As joint-heirs of Christ we can fulfill the word of the Lord as well.

**We must initiate our own prophetic gifting, by FAITH.**

If you are in fellowship with a preacher who has a strong anointed prophetic ministry, ask this person to lay hands on you for the impartation of this gift. See Acts 19:6.

If impartation by a man of God is not possible, you can still speak in your church. I would like to suggest a Pentecostal church, or a church where the gifts of the Holy Spirit are already in operation and are encouraged by the leadership of the Church.

Many people wait for words or phrases to come into their minds before they speak. It is better to speak out of your innermost being, rather than out of your mind or mental understanding.

If you hunger to be a mouthpiece for the Lord, then your “prophetic inner man” must be activated. In other words, put legs on your prophetic hunger. Stand and deliver a prophetic message.

One must speak from a sense of burden or desire of the Holy Spirit within us. This method will bring God's sure word into the midst of His people.

Do not let personal doubt or unbelief hinder God's word from coming to the hearts of the people.

When our lifestyles are in order and we believe that Jesus is the Anointed Christ, then what we speak must be the anointed word of God flowing out of our mouths. A holy word can only be spoken out of a holy life.

**So now it is time to prophesy the word of the Lord. Hallelujah!**

Every child learns to walk with a step, maybe two. So it is with prophecy. Some may only

speak a sentence or two. Others receive a flood of words as the Holy Spirit flows out of them. The thought is more difficult than the speaking.

**So speak!** It is better to add "says the Lord" before, during or after the prophecy. This gives the hearer a confidence that indeed this is the word of the Lord. The hungry soul will become more attentive to the voice of the Lord.

The more we speak the easier it becomes. We can mature our own gifting as we bless the Body of Christ. The more we activate our gifting, the more revelation flows through the vessel. Although God has given us an active anointing, the believer always activates his own gift by choice. Remember to speak at an appropriate time in services.

Consider 1 Cor 14:31: "For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted."

Is it a requirement that the local church make way for the operation of this gifting in every meeting? No! But it is necessary to hear from God, wherever we meet together.

**Remember.... covet the best gifts.** (1 Cor 12:3)  
Be zealous of spiritual gifts and seek to excel.  
(1 Cor 14:12)

## **XI. NEW TESTAMENT PROPHETS**

When we think of a "prophet", we should think of the characteristics and spiritual endowments that produce the vigorous ministry of the prophet.

The New Testament details the characteristics of the prophets in the early church. These men, many with apostolic and "prophetic gifting" were used mightily to establish the church. This is clearly set out in the book of Acts.

When we glean from the scriptures the characteristics of the New Testament prophets, we should consider these for our own lives.

The characteristics of these New Testament prophets should be viewed as the "normal Christian life" for all ministers in training.

**Agabus** is one example of a prophet flowing in the wisdom of the spirit. (Acts 2:10-11) His message from the Holy Spirit foretold the binding of Paul's hands and feet. Prophecy often is linked with one or more of the other gifts of the Holy Spirit. The word of wisdom

delivered by prophecy to Paul, stated that Jerusalem would render to Paul many difficulties.

When the book of Acts becomes our textbook for church government, committee meetings and such can be abolished, because the wisdom of the spirit will be valued more than man's plans. Waiting on the Lord will be the normal way of doing the business of the Church and the word of the Lord will be our first priority, and will be heard and obeyed.

Submission to spiritual gifting and authority always brings lasting results.

### **JOHN THE BAPTIST**

John the Baptist was one of the great New Testament prophets from whom we can learn. John's conception was a miracle. He was a miracle child. (Luke 1:13) John's life was one of ongoing miracles. He was destined for greatness. (Luke 1:14-15)

One of the notable things of John's life was the separation from the things of this world. (1 Jn 2:15) John lived a separated life. John may have lived in the desert for much of his ministry, but this was not the reason for the separation from the world.

Separation from the things of this world is an inward decision, not a geographic separation from mankind. His anointing was not due to the fact he could have been a member of a Christian community in Qumran, but due to his absolute dedication to God. This dedication and separation to God should be emulated by all Bible students seeking to be used of God.

John's preaching demonstrated great power which resulted in hundreds of people walking great distances, even from as far as Jerusalem, to hear the message of John the Baptist. The people were drawn to his anointing. John may have been clothed in camel hair, but he wore a mantle of power. His food may have been locusts and honey, but John was sustained by the word of God. (Matt 3:1-12)

Note John's direct approach when he ministered. He was fearless before the people. He spoke forth truth regardless of the consequences to himself.

John's ministry was more than an evangelistic calling.

John fulfilled the prophetic word for his life. (Mal 3:1 and Matt 3:3)

In Jn 1:23 John the Baptist says, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness." John the Baptist spoke what the prophetic word of the Lord had already spoken of him and his life's work.

God desires that we also fulfill our destiny and walk in the perfect will of God. We can also fulfill the prophetic word for our lives.

John lived and ministered out of personal "preparation".

This preparation is coupled with separation. John baptized in the River Jordan. Baptism symbolized separation. Jesus thought so much of this separation, that He, the anointed sinless Christ, was baptized in the muddy River Jordan by John.

Note: John's humility in the natural act of baptizing Jesus. (Matt 3:11 and John 3:27;30) His anointing was such that some thought he was Elijah while others thought that he was the Messiah himself. (Jn 1:20-21)

### **THE APOSTLE PAUL**

The Apostle Paul is another of the great men of the New Testament who possessed great prophetic anointing.

In an incredible conversion, Saul of Tarsus was saved, sanctified and separated from his former life forever.

And he trembling and astonished said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord [said] unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." (Acts 9:6)

Whilst still known as Saul, he was sent out (by prophesy) with Barnabas on a missionary journey. One of the prophets in a special prayer meeting spoke the Word of the Lord. This resulted in Barnabas and Saul taking a missionary journey.

Thereafter, Paul had a singleness of purpose in his life. Forgetting the past, he pressed toward the mark of the high calling. His desire was to win Christ. He separated himself from his past lifestyle. Paul's close relationship with Jesus Christ was highlighted with many seasons of fasting and prayer.

Paul preached and witnessed with fierce boldness everywhere he went. He took up his cross daily, and he laid down his life daily for Christ. Paul endured affliction, beatings, persecution, prison, shipwreck, and all for the gospel of Christ.

Paul prophesied boldly. He shared this anointing, and laid hands on others to impart the prophetic gift to them. (Acts 19:6)

Paul and his ministry friends having arrived in Caesarea witnessed first hand the gifted prophetic voices of Philip's four daughters. All of Philip's daughters were gifted prophetesses. (Acts 21:8-9)

I am sure Paul wholeheartedly approved and encouraged the daughters of Phillip, who prophesied in their home meetings.

Paul possessed one of the greatest and certainly the most educated minds of all the apostles.

His masterful writings show us some of the greatest written scriptural verse construction of all time. Paul's contributions to the New Testament show us what can happen when ones natural abilities are completely surrendered to God. The Lord anointed Paul, who became one the greatest Apostles of all time.

## **XII. CONCLUSION**

I trust that this teaching on the Prophetic Ministry has been a source of blessing to you. The more you use the prophetic gift, the more God will bless the body of Christ.

The body of Christ is waiting for your gifting to be released. Let a holy boldness come upon you and prophesy!

**Author: Rev. Lawrence Gregor**