

Spiritual Gifts

- I. By the standard accepted definition, a Pentecostal is someone who believes in the **supernatural** gifts of the Spirit in the church today.
- A. There are many gifts available to Christians (administration, helps, etc.) that are not **supernatural**.
- B. Pentecostals (those who believe in the supernatural gifts) include the Apostolic churches, Church of God, Assembly of God, Pentecostal Holiness, and Charismatic churches.
- II. Many denominations believe the supernatural gifts (i.e., tongues or the gift of healing) ceased to operate with the death of the apostles. This belief is based on one passage in the Bible:
- 1Co 13:8-12*⁸ **Charity never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.** ⁹ *For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.* ¹⁰ **But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.** ¹¹ *When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.* ¹² *For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.*
- A. Those who believe in the “cessation of the spiritual gifts” believe that spiritual gifts were given as a temporary solution until the Bible was finished, about 100 A.D. They believe that the phrase “that which is perfect” is talking about the Bible. The theory is that once Christians had the Bible, they no longer needed spiritual gifts.
- B. Pentecostals, on the other hand, believe “that which is perfect” refers to heaven, not the Bible. Paul speaks of seeing “face to face,” a reference to heaven, not the Bible. When we get to heaven, we will no longer need spiritual gifts.
- III. No true spiritual gift will ever cause an individual to act or speak in way that is contrary to the Word of God.
- IV. All spiritual gifts are from God, so we must never allow ourselves to become proud or arrogant in the operation of those gifts.
- For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. (Romans 12:3)*
- V. Since God is the giver of the gifts, it is not wise for us to compare ourselves among ourselves.
- ...but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. (2 Corinthians 10:12)*
- A. Instead, we should focus on finding our gift or gifts and exercising it (them) for the good of the kingdom.
- VI. All gifts are given for the edification of the body of Christ, never for self-glory.
- Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church. (1 Corinthians 14:12)*
- A. Our goal is not to “see” the gifts in operation; it is to edify the church
- B. My observation has been that, almost without exception, where the operation of the gifts was “glorified” or lifted up an individual rather than the body of Christ, there was confusion and hurt rather than edification
- C. Any operation of any “gift” that brings glory primarily to a man should be questioned.
- VII. Because of the power of the occult, all supernatural manifestations are **not** of God.
- A. Supernatural knowledge and other such gifts can be obtained through divination, sorcery, and witchcraft.
- B. While Satan, unlike God, is *not* all-

knowing, there are certain things he knows and can tell you.

- C. Example: God knows your thoughts. Satan, on the other hand, cannot read your mind. He does know, however, whatever he sees or you tell him. Because of this, it is possible for Satan to reveal to someone facts that they otherwise could not know. He would know, for example, that a relative or friend is in the hospital. Since this is “public” knowledge in the spirit world, he can reveal it to a “prophet” who could then share it with you. This *does not* mean the information is from God!

- VIII. “Gifts” in Romans 12:6 comes from the Greek word *charisma*, from which we get “charismatic.” It simply means “spiritual gift” or “miraculous faculty.”

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us...(Romans 12:6)

- IX. These gifts are **unmerited** gifts given according to the sovereignty of God.

- A. Having a particular gift, or being used in a particular way, in no way makes you spiritually “special,” holy, or in any way better than anyone else.

- X. There are nine supernatural gifts of the spirit, according to I Corinthians 12:4-11:

1Co 12:4-11 ⁴ Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵ And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. ⁶ And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. ⁷ But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. ⁸ For to one is given by the Spirit the **word of wisdom**; to another the **word of knowledge** by the same Spirit; ⁹ To another **faith** by the same Spirit; to another the **gifts of healing** by the same Spirit; ¹⁰ To another the **working of miracles**; to another **prophecy**; to another **discerning of spirits**; to another **divers kinds of tongues**; to another the **interpretation of tongues**: ¹¹ But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

- XI. The nine gifts are:

- A. **Word of Wisdom** – A supernatural Word of edification from the Lord; supernatural direction from God which leads one to say or do the right thing at the right time).
- B. **Word of Knowledge** – Supernatural knowledge of facts that one could not know by any other means.
- C. **Faith** – An unusually strong trust or belief in God’s ability, plan, or will.
- D. **Gifts of Healing** – The supernatural power to pray for someone to receive healing (physical, emotional, spiritual) and see it done.
- E. **Working of Miracles** – Similar to Gifts of Healing, but different in that this gift is used to work miracles other than healing.
- F. **Prophecy** – The gift of inspired utterance; receiving a Word from the Lord and communicating it to others. Probably one of the most misunderstood of all gifts.
- G. **Discerning of Spirits** – The ability to recognize spirits, both good and bad, in others.
- H. **Divers Kinds of Tongues** – Receiving a message from God in an unknown tongue. One may have the gift of tongues without the gift of interpretation, though it is common to see both gifts in the same individual.
- I. **Interpretation of Tongues** – The ability to interpret a message given from God in an unknown tongue. One may have the gift of interpretation without the gift of tongues.

- XII. In each service we may see five or six gifts in operation, though they are often not recognized as such.

- A. Because not all gifts are as “visible” as tongues and interpretation or Word of Knowledge, they are not always recognized by everyone.

Word of Wisdom

I Co 12:8⁸ For to one is given by the Spirit the **word of wisdom**;

- I. Might also be called the “Gift of Revelation;” the ability to see things, in the scriptures and everyday situations, that others miss.
 - A. The Word of Wisdom also gives one the ability to *say* or *do* exactly what is needed at the moment, because they are able to *see* things that others do not.
- II. There is also a connection between godly wisdom and what we call “revelation.”
 - A. Someone with the gift has the ability to open the eyes of others to biblical secrets and truths
 - 1. If you’ve ever heard a preacher or speaker show you something from the Bible, and you said, “I never saw that before,” you were experiencing the Word of Wisdom speaking through someone else.
 - 2. The Word of Wisdom in others will sometimes make you say, “Now why didn’t I think of that?”
- III. Pentecostals (Apostolics in particular) believe in the need for a divine **revelation**. Because of this we are sometimes accused of believing that the Bible is not “enough,” or that we get some of our beliefs outside of the Bible.
 - A. Those who make such accusations simply do not understand what we mean by “revelation.” We do not believe additional writings (other than the Bible) are needed (unlike the Mormons, for example). However, we believe that it takes the Spirit to open a person’s eyes to truly see what is *in* the Bible.
 - B. The proof of this obvious: take any major secular college, any Biblical Studies department, and you will find scores of professors who *know* the Bible, yet who have never met the *author* of the Bible. We can say that they are experts in the text, but have

received the *revelation* of the power of the text.

Eph 1:15-18¹⁵ Wherefore I also, **after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus**, and love unto all the saints,¹⁶ Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;¹⁷ That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:¹⁸ The eyes of your understanding being enlightened;

- C. This passage is interesting on several levels:
 - 1. The Ephesians were already Christians (Eph. 1:1,15)
 - 2. Paul prayed that they would receive the spirit of wisdom (vs. 17)
 - 3. Paul prayed that they would receive the revelation (vs. 17)

I Co 14:6⁶ Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by **revelation**, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?

I Co 14:26²⁶ How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, **hath a revelation**, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.

- IV. Paul is a classic example of someone who had education without wisdom and revelation. It was not until his conversion that he saw all of the clues he had missed in the Old Testament.

Col 1:28-29²⁸ Whom we preach, warning every man, and **teaching every man in all wisdom**...²⁹ Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

- V. Jesus promised a special gift of wisdom to His disciples:

Luk 21:12-15¹² But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake.¹³ And it shall turn to you for a testimony.¹⁴ Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer:¹⁵ For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be

able to gainsay nor resist.

- A. In essence, they were told to not “worry” about the right words to say; they would be given the right words supernaturally.

VI. The Word of Wisdom can be useful in the business matters of the church:

Act 6:2-3 ² Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. ³ Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

- A. It is one thing to be “smart;” quite another to be wise.
- B. There is absolutely no correlation between intelligence and wisdom, or earthly knowledge and wisdom.

1. Some of the wisest (spiritually speaking) people I have ever met have been grade school dropouts, while the lack of wisdom in the halls of government is sometimes breathtaking in scope, in spite of the fact that they are filled with Harvard and Yale graduates.
2. Dennis Prager has observed that our secular colleges and universities are some of the most barren places on earth with regards to wisdom.

VII. There is also a difference between earthly wisdom and spiritual wisdom:

1Co 1:19-24 ¹⁹ For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise...²⁰ Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? ²¹ For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. ²² For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: ²³ But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; ²⁴ But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God,

and the wisdom of God.

1Co 2:4-7 ⁴ And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: ⁵ That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. ⁶ Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: ⁷ But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

1Co 3:18-20 ¹⁸ Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. ¹⁹ For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. ²⁰ And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.

VIII. Everyone is encouraged to ask for wisdom

Jam 1:5-7 ⁵ If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. ⁶ But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. ⁷ For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

- A. “Asking in faith” doesn’t mean simply believing when asking; it addresses motivation: why do you want spiritual wisdom? To win biblical arguments? Or to know more and share more about God? What is your motive?

IX. Like all other spiritual gifts, wisdom is given for edification of the body and is to be used in humility

Jam 3:17 ¹⁷ But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

Word of Knowledge

*1Co 12:7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. ⁸ For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the **word of knowledge** by the same Spirit;*

I. The “manifestation of the Spirit” means “the way the Spirit is revealed.” God reveals His Spirit through the gifts.

A. These revelations of the Spirit are for our “profit,” or benefit.

II. “Word of Wisdom” is the supernatural ability to take known facts and reveal hidden truths in those facts, while “Word of Knowledge” is the supernatural ability to know facts that are otherwise unknown.

III. Jesus exhibited the Word of Knowledge often in His ministry:

Mat 9:4 ⁴ And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?

A. Word of Knowledge is necessary in order to know someone’s thoughts.

Luk 7:39-40 ³⁹ Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner. ⁴⁰ And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on.

B. It is interesting that Jesus “answered” the Pharisee, even though he (the Pharisee) spoke “within himself.” Jesus had supernatural knowledge of his thoughts.

Luk 11:16-17 ¹⁶ And others, tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven. ¹⁷ But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth.

Joh 7:14-15 ¹⁴ Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught. ¹⁵ And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?

C. Jesus told His disciples to “take no thought” about what they would say when challenged (Matthew 10:19, Mark 13:11), and that they would be given what to say in that hour. This is a form of “Word of Knowledge,” where the Spirit supplies you with the knowledge to “fill in the blanks” when witnessing.

Rom 15:14 ¹⁴ And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.

1Co 1:4-8 ⁴ I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; ⁵ That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; ⁶ Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: ⁷ So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: ⁸ Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

IV. Paul commended the Corinthians on their use of the gifts, and expressed his desire that they would come behind in **no** gift until the coming of the Lord. They would be confirmed (through the gifts) **unto the end**.

A. Paul certainly does not sound like someone who expected the operation of the gifts to end soon, as many teach today. He expected the operation of the gifts unto the end.

1Co 2:9-14 ⁹ But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. ¹⁰ But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

V. It is impossible to know what God has for you except through the Spirit.

A. This is why some are able to sit “ho-hum” through a church service, oblivious to what is going on around them.

¹¹ ...even so the things of God knoweth no man,

but the Spirit of God. ¹² Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. ¹³ ...not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. ¹⁴ But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

- B. There are few principles in life that are more important than this: the wisdom and knowledge of God do not come through natural means.

VI. Paul indicated that Word of Wisdom, Word of Knowledge, and Prophecy were *at least as important* as the Gift of Tongues:

1Co 14:6 ⁶ *Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation [word of wisdom], or by knowledge [word of knowledge], or by prophesying, or by doctrine?*

- A. Many who are ignorant on this subject seem to think that tongues and interpretation are the “only” spiritual gifts.

Faith

1Co 12:9 ⁹ To another **faith** by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

I. Everyone is given some measure of faith at birth.

Romans 12:3 ³ ...God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

A. It is natural to believe in a higher power or a God

II. Even though everyone is given a measure of faith at birth, all people do not have faith.

2 Thessalonians 3:2 ² ...all men have not faith.

A. Our faith may be cast off, overthrown, or fail.

1 Timothy 5:12 ¹² Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith.

2 Timothy 2:18 ¹⁸ Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.

Luke 22:32 ³² But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

1. Jesus is speaking to Peter, who had faith but was not yet converted

B. One does not fall away from God because he or she stops working; one falls away because he or she stops trusting

III. It is impossible to please God without faith

Hebrews 11:6 ⁶ But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

IV. Faith may grow and may be increased.

2 Thessalonians 1:3 ³ ...your faith groweth

exceedingly...

Luke 17:5 ⁵ And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.

Romans 10:17 ¹⁷ So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

A. This is one reason the preached Word is so important to us: our faith is increased every time we **hear** the Word.

B. Faith is also built up through exercising it.

Hebrews 5:14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

V. Faith does not compel God to do our bidding; faith compels us to obey and trust God

Hebrews 11:13 ¹³ These all died in faith, **not having received the promises**, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them...

A. Had their concept of faith been the modern concept, they would have died saying God had failed them

B. Hebrews 11, which lists the heroes of faith, is a chapter of *action*

1. Abel offered...
2. Noah prepared...
3. Abraham obeyed...
4. Sara received...
5. Abraham offered...
6. Isaac blessed...
7. Jacob blessed...
8. Joseph gave...
9. Moses' parents hid...
10. Moses forsook...
11. Israel passed...

C. The faith of Hebrews is a faith that compels action on the part of the believer, not a faith that demands action from God.

VI. Child-like faith is not believing that one will receive everything one wants.

- A. “Child-like” faith is “child-like” in the sense that trust is absolute; even children from abusive homes will scream for their parents when separated.

Act 6:8 ⁸ And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.

VII. Faith that doesn't produce obedience is useless

James 2:17-26 ¹⁷ Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. ¹⁸ Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. ¹⁹ Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. ²⁰ But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? ²¹ Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? ²² Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?...²⁴ Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only...²⁶ For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

- C. One general rule is that you **don't** have the gift of faith if you aren't **doing** something.

- A. Simply believing in God is not the same as following Him. Many people believe in God, yet do not serve Him, and in many cases are very evil in their deeds.
- B. Repentance is the process of changing direction – a decision to live for God and obey His Word to the best of our ability.

VIII. The **gift** of faith is extraordinary trust and confidence in God, not to do whatever we demand, but to accomplish His work in us and through us.

- A. Hebrews 11 lists the heroes of faith, who did not receive their promises but trusted unconditionally.
- B. Jesus had all nine gifts of the Spirit without measure:

Joh 3:34 ³⁴ For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.

- 1. Yet the faith of Jesus was not “name it and claim it” or “blab it and grab it;” if it were, He would have been disappointed in Gethsemane.

The Gifts of Healing

1Co 12:9-10 ⁹ *To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;* ¹⁰ *To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy;*

“Gifts” is plural, implying that there are different types or classes of healing, such as physical, psychological, social, familial, and spiritual.

Working of Miracles

- I. “Working” is translated from the Greek noun *energema*, from which we get “energy” and “energize.”
 - A. The NAS translates the phrase “the effecting of miracles.”
 - B. The gift is not limited to just performing miracles; the gifted person *energizes* the atmosphere whenever he or she is present, building faith and making miracles more probable.
- II. Earlier we studied the gift of faith, which emphasizes action on the part of the person holding the gift. However, a person may have tremendous faith, faith that compels them to become a missionary, build a church, and do other great works that others did not think possible, while at the same time not necessarily inspiring great faith in others. The **Gift of Faith** inspires the one with the gift to do great things; the **Gift of Working of Miracles** enables the one with the gift to “energize” others, creating an atmosphere where miracles can take place.
 - A. For example, Noah had tremendous faith, faith that compelled him to work 100 years on an ark, but his faith did not affect anyone around him other than his family.
 - B. Jesus, on the other hand, inspired faith in nearly everyone he met. He wasn’t just faithful to his calling; He energized others.
- III. **Gift of Working (energizing) of Miracles:** the supernatural ability to inspire an atmosphere of faith and power where miracles can happen.

Prophecy

- I. My personal favorite gift; also one of the more controversial and misunderstood gifts.
- II. In the OT, the word “prophet” comes from the Hebrew noun *nabiy* (naw-bee), which means “inspired man.”
 - A. It referred to one who spoke under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

2Pe 1:21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.
 - B. Simply put, a prophet is someone who hears from God and shares what he or she hears.
 - C. The Hebrew word for prophet, *nabiy*, comes from the Hebrew verb *naba* (naw-baw), which means “to speak (or sing) by inspiration (in prediction or simple discourse).”
 1. Not only could a prophet deliver a Word from the Lord in a sermon or statement, but he could deliver it in a song, like David.
 2. The only qualification for a prophecy was that it came from God.
- III. In the NT, the word “prophecy” comes from the Greek word *propheteuo* (prof-ate-yoo'-o) which means “to speak forth by divine inspiration.”
 - A. It has the same basic meaning as the Hebrew word in the OT.
- IV. Contrary to popular belief, prophecy is *not* always foretelling the future (though this is included in prophecy).
 - A. Much of what the OT prophets preached was not predicting the future; Nathan, for example, preached conviction on David.
 - B. *Any* God-inspired word, song, or testimony meets the Biblical test of prophecy.
 1. I have had so-called “prophets” get angry at me because I taught

the “little people” that they could prophesy via songs, testimonies, etc.

2. The “prophets” were offended because I knocked down the pedestal that they had placed themselves on.
3. Joel said God would pour out His Spirit on *all* flesh and that sons and daughters prophesying would be a common thing, not a mysterious gift reserved only for the super-spiritual.

V. Through careful examination of Old Testament examples of prophets and prophecy, coupled with the OT definition of prophecy, we can understand who God considers a prophet and what He considers prophecy

VI. God called Abraham a prophet because he was inspired by God.

Genesis 20:7 Now therefore restore the man [Abraham] his wife; for he is a prophet...

A. The only predictive prophecy Abraham ever specifically made was that of the ram that would be provided on Mount Moriah.

VII. God called Aaron a prophet because he was Moses’ spokesman. We have no evidence that he ever foretold the future.

Exodus 7:1 And the LORD said unto Moses... Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet.

A. Aaron met the criteria for being a prophet because he repeated the words handed by God (the Law)

VIII. Miriam was called a prophetess, though her only inspired utterance was one verse (Exodus 15:21), a **song** of victory. It was **not** a prediction.

Exodus 15:20 And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances.

IX. In Numbers 11:25, the seventy elders of Israel prophesied when the spirit of the Lord came on them

Numbers 11:25 And the LORD came down in a

cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass, that, when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease.

A. We are not told what they said, though some scholars suggest they spoke in tongues.

Numbers 11:26-29 ²⁶ But there remained two of the men in the camp, the name of the one was Eldad, and the name of the other Medad: and the spirit rested upon them; and they were of them that were written, but went not out unto the tabernacle: and they prophesied in the camp. ²⁷ And there ran a young man, and told Moses, and said, Eldad and Medad do prophesy in the camp. ²⁸ And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Moses, one of his young men, answered and said, My lord Moses, forbid them. ²⁹ And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the LORD’S people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his spirit upon them!

B. Whatever they said was spectacular enough to cause Joshua concern, because he asked Moses to forbid it.

C. Moses expressed a desire that all would prophesy, implying that this gift is not for a select few.

X. Since the Biblical definition of prophecy is “inspired utterance,” even tongues can technically be called a form of prophecy.

A. Tongues are a) an utterance, and b) inspired by God.

XI. A prophet may receive a word from the Lord in a vision or dream:

Numbers 12:6 ⁶ And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream.

A. However, **all** visions and dreams are **not** necessarily from the Lord

B. Even dreams accompanied by signs and wonders are to be dismissed if they contradict the Word of the Lord:

*Deuteronomy 13:¹ If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, ² **And the sign or the wonder come to pass**, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; ³ **Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams:** for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.*

C. **As stated in this passage, signs, wonders, and prophetic utterances can never usurp the authority of God's commandments in His written Word!** God sometimes allows even accurate prophecies in order to prove us.

XII. Sometimes the Word of the Lord to a prophet is a command or exhortation to the people, not a prediction.

Hosea 10:12 Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.

XIII. Prophecy contrary to the Word of God would be punished by death:

Deuteronomy 18:20 But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die.

A. It is a serious and dangerous thing to profess to prophesy something and falsely claim it is from God.

XIV. Moses was called a prophet (Deut. 34:10), though the vast bulk of his ministry was spent transmitting the law from God, not predicting the future.

Deuteronomy 34:10 ¹⁰ And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face,

A. He was a prophet because his utterances to the people (the Laws) were inspired by God.

XV. In Judges 6:8-10, we have a record of an unnamed prophet who did nothing but tell the Israelites all God had done for them, and that they had disobeyed God. There is no prediction of the future in his words at all.

A. Again, he was a prophet because he was commanded to speak these words by the Lord.

XVI. In 1 Samuel 10:5-13, Saul and the company of prophets prophesied, though we are not told what they said.

1 Samuel 10:10-13 ¹⁰ And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him [Saul]; and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them. ¹¹ And it came to pass, when all that knew him beforetime saw that, behold, he prophesied among the prophets, then the people said one to another, What is this that is come unto the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets? ¹² And one of the same place answered and said, But who is their father? Therefore it became a proverb, Is Saul also among the prophets? ¹³ And when he had made an end of prophesying, he came to the high place.

A. Again, some theologians suggest that they spoke in tongues, since their words are not recorded. **There is a close connection in the Bible between tongues and prophecy.**
 B. Had they spoken intelligible words, most likely these would have been recorded

XVII. In 1 Samuel 18:10, an **evil** spirit from God caused Saul to prophesy

1 Samuel 18:10 And it came to pass on the morrow, that the evil spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of the house: and David played with his hand, as at other times: and there was a javelin in Saul's hand.

A. Once more, he may have spoken in tongues, though this time it was evil in origin
 B. It still qualified as prophecy, because it was inspired by an evil spirit from God
 C. All prophecy is not good

XVIII. In 1 Samuel 19:20-24, the company of prophets and Saul (though he was trying to kill David) again prophesied, though we are not told what was said

1 Samuel 19:20-24 ²⁰ And Saul sent messengers to take David: and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as appointed over them, the Spirit of God was upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied...²³ And he went thither to Naioth in Ramah: and the Spirit of God was upon him also, and he went on, and prophesied..²⁴ And he stripped off his clothes also, and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Wherefore they say, Is Saul also among the prophets?

- A. Vs 23 says the spirit of the Lord was upon Saul, apparently suggesting that even in a wayward state he could still be affected by the Spirit of God
- B. They may all have spoken in tongues
- C. It is not logical to assume that all spoke a “word from the Lord” – no “Word” is mentioned

XIX. In 2 Samuel 7:2-5, Nathan the prophet erred in telling David to build God a house, an error God corrected that night.

2 Samuel 7:2 That the king said unto Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains. ³ And Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that is in thine heart; for the LORD is with thee. ⁴ And it came to pass that night, that the word of the LORD came unto Nathan, saying, ⁵ Go and tell my servant David, Thus saith the LORD, Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in?

- A. This is proof prophets, even true prophets, are not infallible. We must be vigilant to be sure every word is from the Lord.
- B. Notice, however, that in verse 3 Nathan did not say, “Thus saith the LORD”

XX. Prophets differed from priests in the OT in that the primary function of priests was to **teach** the Law and perform sacraments (sacrifices, etc.).

- A. They did not necessarily need a special word from the Lord to do this.
- B. Prophets, however, heard from God.
- C. Some priests were also prophets, such as Moses, Aaron, and Samuel.
- D. The priesthood was a birthright; the office of prophet was a calling.

XXI. Prophecy, since it is by definition an utterance inspired by God, may go forth in song or music:

1 Chr 25:1 Moreover David and the captains of the host separated to the service of the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, **who should prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals:**

1 Chronicles 25:3 Of Jeduthun: the sons of Jeduthun; Gedaliah, and Zeri, and Jeshaiiah, Hashabiah, and Mattithiah, six, under the hands of their father Jeduthun, **who prophesied with a harp, to give thanks and to praise the LORD.**

XXII. Prophecy may be a proverb, rather than a prediction or rebuke:

Proverbs 30:1 The words of Agur the son of Jakeh, even the prophecy: the man spake unto Ithiel, even unto Ithiel and Ucal,

XXIII. Prophecy, then, may be a:

- A. Prediction about the future
- B. Exhortation
- C. Rebuke
- D. Command
- E. Tongues
- F. Song
- G. Instrumental
- H. Proverb
- I. Prediction

XXIV. The fact that there were numerous minor prophets (Gad, Iddo, Huldah, Oded, Shemaiah, etc.) and entire schools of unnamed prophets in the OT suggests that prophets were far more common than is often realized

- A. We tend to focus on the deeds of the major prophets, i.e., Elijah, Isaiah, etc.
- B. Focusing on the “super” prophets results in the over-glorification of the office of

the prophet and the gift of prophecy
itself

Caiaphas the high priest did in John 11:51, and
this qualifies as a prophecy

XXV. All gifts are for the glory of God alone, not the
possessor of the gift or the gift itself

- A. Men seek the title “prophet” because of
the mystique surrounding it
- B. In reality, any individual who speaks a
word inspired of God is exercising
prophecy

John 11:49 *And one of them, named Caiaphas,
being the high priest that same year, said unto
them, Ye know nothing at all,⁵⁰ Nor consider
that it is expedient for us, that one man should
die for the people, and that the whole nation
perish not.⁵¹ And this spake he not of himself;
but being high priest that year, he prophesied
that Jesus should die for that nation;*

XXVI. Those who sing, testify, play an instrument,
preach, or teach under the inspiration of the Holy
Ghost are prophesying

- A. All of these are not necessarily *prophets*,
however; a prophet is one who regularly
and consistently receives a Word from
the Lord (an anointed preacher, for
example)

- A. So according to the writer of John,
Caiaphas was unknowingly used by God
to prophesy about Jesus’ sacrificial
death.
- B. Remember: the definition of prophecy is
“inspired utterance,” even if the
“prophet” doesn’t realize it!

XXVII. Dreams or any other such prophetic utterances
are always inferior to the Word

Jer 23:25 *I have heard what the prophets said,
that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have
dreamed, I have dreamed.*

²⁸ *The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a
dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak
my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the
wheat? saith the LORD.²⁹ Is not my word like
as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer
that breaketh the rock in pieces?*

XXX. Prophets in the Church Age

- A. Numerous prophets are mentioned in the
book of Acts (notably Agabus and the
daughters of Philip)

Acts 11:27-28 ²⁷ *And in these days
came prophets from Jerusalem unto
Antioch.²⁸ And there stood up one of
them named Agabus, and signified by
the Spirit that there should be great
dearth throughout all the world: which
came to pass in the days of Claudius
Caesar.*

Acts 13:1-2 *Now there were in the
church that was at Antioch certain
prophets and teachers...² As they
ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the
Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas
and Saul for the work whereunto I have
called them.*

Acts 15:32 ³² *And Judas and Silas,
being prophets also themselves,
exhorted the brethren with many words,
and confirmed them.*

Acts 21:8-9 ⁸ *And the next day we that
were of Paul's company departed, and
came unto Caesarea: and we entered
into the house of Philip the evangelist,
which was one of the seven; and abode
with him.⁹ And the same man had four*

XXVIII. Prophesying and casting out devils in
Jesus’ name is not proof of a knowledge
of Him

Mat 7:22 *Many will say to me in that day, Lord,
Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and
in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy
name done many wonderful works?²³ And then
will I profess unto them, I never knew you:
depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*

Mat 24:24 *For there shall arise false Christs,
and false prophets, and shall show great signs
and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible,
they shall deceive the very elect.*

XXIX. It is possible for God to inspire a sinner or
unbeliever to speak a word from the Lord, as

daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.

Ephesians 3:4-5 ⁴ *Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)* ⁵ *Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is **now** revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;*

XXXI. Too much attention is given by Paul to the proper exercise of this gift for it to be non-existent in the church

Romans 12:6 ⁶ *Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;*

XXXII. He mentions the office of prophet as one of the ministerial gifts in Ephesians 4

Eph 4:11-13 ¹¹ *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;* ¹² *For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:* ¹³ *Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:*

- A. Note that the five-fold ministry was given for the “perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, and for the edifying of the body of Christ **until**:
1. We all come in the unity of the faith (hasn’t happened yet)
 2. We all come in the knowledge of the Son of God (maybe)
 3. We all are perfect (hasn’t happened yet)
 4. We have all reached the measure set by Jesus, the perfect man (hasn’t happened yet)

XXXIII. The purpose of prophecy in the Church

1 Cor 14:3 *But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.* ⁴ *He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.*

- A. The purpose of prophecy is to edify, exhort, and comfort (*not* divide, incidentally)
- B. God’s love for us is so great that He devised means to reconcile us to Him, even when we are not sensitive to His direct voice.

2 Sam 14:14 *...yet doth he devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him.*

XXXIV. The last days would be marked by prophecy:

Acts 2:17-18 ¹⁷ *And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:* ¹⁸ *And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:*

- A. If prophecy has already ceased, then the last days are past

Discerning of Spirits

*1Co 12:10*¹⁰ *To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:*

The nine supernatural Gifts of the Spirit are traditionally divided into three categories:

I. The Gifts of Action, or Power

- A. Faith
- B. Gifts of Healing
- C. Working of Miracles

II. The Speaking Gifts

- A. Prophecy
- B. Tongues
- C. Interpretation of Tongues

III. The Knowing Gifts

- A. Word of Wisdom
- B. Word of Knowledge
- C. Discerning of Spirits

Discerning of Spirits is the third of the **Knowing** gifts, in which God grants the recipient supernatural knowledge. In the case of Discerning of Spirits, it is the supernatural knowledge of another person's spirit or motivation.

“Discerning” comes from the Greek word *diakresis*, which means “judging.”

“**Discerning of Spirits**” simply means “judging the spirit behind an attitude, statement, or action.”

Diakresis is found in only two other verses:

Rom 14:1 *Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations [diakresis, judgments].*

I like the NIV rendering of Romans 14:1:

Rom 14:1 *Romans 14:1* *Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters.*

In other words, don't quibble, or dispute, with “weaker”

saints over non-essentials. Let them get the basics down pat, and discussions over deeper and potentially more confusing topics can come later.

*Heb 5:14*¹⁴ *But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern [diakresis, judge] both good and evil.*

Notice that in both verses, *diakresis* [judgment] is reserved for mature saints.

*1Co 2:11-14*¹¹ *For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?*

Literally, “no man knows what another man thinks or feels.” You are the only person who knows what you are thinking and how you feel.

...even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

Paul is saying that just like one man can't possibly read another man's mind, the only “one” who really knows what God “thinks” is God's own Spirit. Since only God's Spirit knows the mind of God, we can only know the mind of God if we have God's Spirit.

¹² Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. ¹³ Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. ¹⁴ But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Discerning of Spirits is about judging **spirits**, not **people**. Individuals within the Church are never allowed to judge others. Furthermore, lay individuals are never commanded or permitted by scripture to **rebuke** others (except when wronged by a brother, a special case discussed later), since rebuke implies a prior judgment. Only two individuals in the New Testament are ever commanded or authorized to rebuke: Timothy and Titus. Both were pastors and were authorized to rebuke in their pastoral capacity.

Correct biblical judgment is probably one of the most misunderstood concepts in scripture. Biblically speaking, it is **wrong** for individuals to judge other individuals, particularly those outside the Church. However, it **correct, and even commanded**, for the **Church**, as a body, to judge its own.

When Jesus taught the multitudes in the Sermon on the Mount, He said the following:

Mat 7:1 Judge not, that ye be not judged.

Remember, however, that He is speaking to people in general and dealing with interpersonal relationships, not Church discipline.

However, in Matthew 18 Jesus is addressing His disciples specifically, and gives them instructions for handling disputes in the Church:

Mat 18:15-17 ¹⁵ *Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.* ¹⁶ *But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.* ¹⁷ *And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.*

All of the preceding passage implies a level of judgment. An individual cannot go to another for a fault unless he first “judges” that he has been wronged. The Church cannot treat an offender as a heathen and publican without first judging him guilty.

None of this applies to judging someone who has sinned or not lived up to your standards or expectations. We are talking strictly about brothers or sisters who have **wronged you**, not someone you think needs to be “corrected.” Unless you are a pastor you aren’t given the Biblical authority to correct.

Rom 14:10 ¹⁰ *But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.*

Rom 14:13 ¹³ *Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this*

rather, that no man put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

However, the preceding should not be taken as saying that there is never a time to judge:

1Co 5:1-5 *It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.* ² *And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.*

It is interesting to note that Paul doesn’t tell the Corinthians what action they *should* have taken against the offender other than to say they should be mourning. In other words, gross sin in the church is a time for prayer and intercession.

³ *For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed,*

Paul himself judged the offender, but as the spiritual father (founder) and pastor of the church, he had the right (and obligation) to do so.

⁴ *In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,* ⁵ *To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*

Even though the language seems harsh on the surface, the underlying purpose of “delivering the offender to Satan” is clear: *that the spirit may be saved*. Paul is not giving up on the offender; far from it, he is taking drastic action to save the man’s soul.

1Co 5:9-6:8 ⁹ *I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators:* ¹⁰ *Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world.*

Paul instructs the Corinthians to avoid fornicators *within*

the Church. He is specific that the rule does not apply to sinners outside the Church; we can't win sinners if we avoid them. Instead, we are to avoid fornicators who call themselves brothers:

¹¹ But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. ¹² For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?

Not only does the Church have a right to judge its own, it has an obligation and a command.

*¹³ But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person. **6:1** Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?*

Christians should never have to resort to courts and a worldly legal system filled with and run by ungodly men to settle our disputes with each other.

² Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? ³ Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life? ⁴ If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church.

According to Paul, even a new convert is more qualified to judge spiritual matters than an unsaved judge or jury.

⁵ I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren? ⁶ But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers. ⁷ Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?

Better to allow yourself to be wronged, than to shame the Church by taking a brother or sister to court.

⁸ Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren.

***1Co 14:29** ²⁹ Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.*

***Phi 1:9** ⁹ And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment;*

***Jam 4:10-12** ¹⁰ Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up. ¹¹ Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. ¹² There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?*

Once again James affirms that we are to judge ourselves and spirits, not brothers and sisters.

***1Jo 4:1** Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.*