

The GIFT of PROPHECY

by Dr. Jay Zinn

When Jesus walked this earth he was anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power (Acts 10:38). Now seated in heavenly places at the right hand of the Father, Jesus has distributed nine gifts of the Holy Spirit to us in order to continue the supernatural ministry he began (Acts 1:1). On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the disciples. This anointed them with power from God to enable them, with a supernatural ability, to meet the needs of people. This anointing has been given to the church as evidence of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ to a lost world. *Mark 16:15-20; Acts 4:29-31; 1 Corinthians 12:1, 4-11; 14:1*

The word for gift in the Greek is *charisma*, which means: “a gift of grace, a gift involving grace on the part of God as the Donor.” If I have a gift for someone but can’t give it to them personally, I’ll give it to a carrier and ask them to deliver the gift on my behalf. This is how it is with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. They do not come from our own natural abilities and talents, we are God’s “carriers” assigned to deliver the particular “gift” of the Holy Spirit which meets the direct, specific need. The gift of prophecy is regarded as the greatest of these gifts to operate in and edify God’s people.

It is interesting to see how important these gifts are when observing the number of situations in which they were manifested in the life of Jesus in the Gospels and the apostles in the book of Acts. Note how high on the scale the gift of prophecy was used:

<u>GIFT</u>	<u>GOSPELS</u> (199)	<u>ACTS</u> (144)
Word of Wisdom	130 (65%)	70 (49%)
Prophecy	66 (33%)	7 (5%)
Word of Knowledge	64 (32%)	12 (8%)
Gifts of Healing	35 (18%)	14 (10%)
Discerning of spirits	30 (15%)	14 (10%)
Gift of Faith	18 (9%)	9 (6%)
Gift of Miracles	13 (7%)	13 (9%)

The NINE spiritual gifts fall into three categories:

1. The **REVELATION** gifts (imparted knowledge gifts):
Word of Wisdom, Word of Knowledge, Discerning of spirits
2. The **INSPIRATIONAL** gifts (imparted speaking gifts):
Gift of Tongues, Gift of Interpretation, Gift of Prophecy
3. The **DEMONSTRATION** gifts (imparted action gifts):
Gift of Faith, Gifts of Healing, Gift of Miracles

We will concentrate in this study on the “inspirational” gift of Prophecy with its companion “revelation” gift of the Word of Knowledge.

The Gift of the Word of Knowledge is the supernatural impartation of a portion of God’s knowledge of facts and information that is humanly impossible to obtain or know by any natural means. It may come through a dream or vision; or through an inner or audible voice of the Spirit. This will be found to operate through prophetic words to individuals. *Examples of words of knowledge:* Jesus knew that Lazarus was dead (**John 11:11-14**), Jesus knew the woman’s past and current marital status (**John 4:17-18**), and Peter knew that Ananias and Sapphira had lied (**Acts 5:1-11**)

The Gift of Prophecy is the supernatural impartation to “speak forth” a message from God which will build, strengthen, encourage, and comfort the church or individual (**1 Corinthians 14:3-4**) and/or expose the secrets of the heart of the unbeliever who is listening and convicted by what is said (**1 Corinthians 14:24-25**). *Examples:* Philip had four virgin daughters who prophesied (**Acts 21:8-9**), Agabus, a prophet, was used in a higher level of prophecy that is “future-telling” (**Acts 21:10-11**). Such directive and forth telling prophecies carry a higher degree of maturity and accountability which requires judgment by the recipient’s spirit, conscience, and integrity as well as the careful assessment of peers and spiritual overseers to weigh the *word* (**1 Corinthians 14:29** and **1 Thessalonians 5:21**).

How to be used in the gift of Prophecy:

1. It begins by receiving the anointing of the Holy Spirit, that is—be baptized in the power of the Holy Spirit (**Acts 1:8**). Jesus wasn't used in the spiritual gifts until after he was anointed by the Holy Spirit (**Luke 4:14-19; John 1:32-34; 2:11**).
2. Believe it is for today and that you can operate in the gifts (**Mark 16:17**).
3. Eagerly desire the spiritual gifts, especially prophecy—covet it (**1 Corinthians 14:1; 12**).
4. Educate yourself on the prophetic gifts—don't be ignorant about them (**1 Corinthians 12:1**). *See list of books at end of notes.*
5. Pray and ask God for this gift to manifest itself within your own life (**Matthew 7:11; 1 Corinthians 14:13**).
6. Understand that *knowing* about this gift isn't *doing*. We grow through practicing prophecy, that is—*wait* on God to be in tune with the Spirit's voice and then *act* upon his leading. Be willing to take risks and fail (**1 Corinthians 13:9**). Samuel the prophet had to grow in discerning the voice of the Lord (**1 Samuel 3**).
 - practice at church.
 - practice at work.
 - practice when opportunities arise to pray for people.
 - practice on a prophetic ministry team.
7. Allow the practice of prophecy to be measured and judged by the Word of God (**Deuteronomy 4:2; Proverbs 30:5-6**).
8. Be accountable in prophecy and allow your spiritual leaders to bring constructive criticism to keep you accountable and appropriately equipped in the practice of the gifts for the safety of the church and to protect against human error or manipulation (**Deuteronomy 18:21-22; Jeremiah 23:9-40; 1 Corinthians 12:9; 14:29**).
9. Understand that it is not you who possesses the gift, but the Holy Spirit within you who has anointed you to be a carrier/deliverer of the appropriate gift of prophecy for the appropriate occasion at the appropriate time (**1 Corinthians 12:7-11**).
10. Stir up the gift of prophecy in you and don't neglect its use (**1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6**). Yield yourself intelligently and voluntarily. Take the initiative to listen to the Holy Spirit's leading. Like the wave of a radio band, the station and voice is always there when you tune into to it. So it is with the Holy Spirit.
11. Be motivated and governed by love in the gifts with a desire to bless and edify God's people (**1 Corinthians 13; 1 Corinthians 14:12, 26, 33, 40**).
12. Operate in an appropriate and orderly way:
 - not in an abusive, spooky, exhibitionist, or extravagant way (i.e. screaming)
 - in the proper timing and lull in the service when it doesn't interrupt the flow
 - in a way that doesn't draw attention to yourself, but to the message
 - in the continuity of the developing theme and present flow of the Holy Spirit
13. Be specific to let the person know when you're praying for them and when you're being prophetic.
14. It's always a step of faith. If you don't step out you'll miss out on the invisible solid ground that waits for your foot to stand on.

Four Prophetic Components:

1. **Revelation** – The first part of a prophecy is receiving information from God without prior knowledge. It comes in the form of a picture, a word, an object, an animal, an action scene, a scripture verse, a number, an impression, or a name (**Zechariah 1:7-8**).
2. **Interpretation** – The second part of prophecy is the interpretation, "What does this mean?" (**Zechariah 1:9-10**). Sometimes the Lord will show you, sometimes he won't. Don't try to force the interpretation. Many times the person you're speaking to will know the interpretation and what doesn't make sense to you may make perfect sense to them.
3. **Application** – The third part of prophecy is the "What do we do with this?" This is mostly left up to the person receiving the word to determine the application. They'll know in their hearts what to do from there.
4. **Declaration** – Pray and declare the word over them after the first three are established. It is a calling out of those things God has declared through prophecy.

Two Types of Prophecy:

1. Forth-telling – communicating the mind of God for the *present*.
2. Future-telling – communicating the mind of God for the *future*.

5 Levels of Prophecy:

1. Bible Prophecy (**2 Peter 1:20-21**).
2. Spirit of Prophecy (**Numbers 11:25-29; 1 Samuel 10:10-11; 18:10; 19:20-24**).
3. Gift of Prophecy (**1 Corinthians 14:31; Joel 2:28-29**) – a "now" word to edify.
4. The Prophetic Office (**Ephesians 2:20; 4:11; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Acts 13:1**).
5. The Prophetic Presbytery (**1 Timothy 1:14; 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6**).

Tips on Prophetic Etiquette:

1. When approaching someone to pray for or prophesy to, get their permission first.
2. Don't prophesy in a church where the pastor disallows or rejects the gift.
3. Be submitted to the authority of the church and get permission first to prophesy.
4. Don't use the prophetic gift to manipulate a person's life's choices.
5. You are merely a messenger to bless, not to entangle or tie someone to your "word." Manipulating someone prophetically to make choices that align with what you think they should do is paramount to witchcraft.
6. Don't be defensive or resistant to your word being required to be judged by the recipient and/or spiritual leaders. Be humble, you could be wrong.
7. Prophecy is subjective (rhema) and the Word of God is objective (logos). Both are required to compliment not oppose or conflict with the other.
8. Don't use prophecy to adjust or rebuke a church, that is a prophet's role.
9. Don't use prophecy to promote your agenda or pet doctrines.
10. Prophecy is to be used as an expression of God's love to build the person up.

Twelve Tests for Prophecy:

1. **Test of Spirit** (1 John 4:1-3; 1 Kings 22). Holy Spirit, human spirit, or evil spirit
2. **Test of Fulfillment in Time** (Deuteronomy 18:22). Does it come to pass?
3. **Test of Worship** (Deuteronomy 13:1-5). Does it lead us to worship God?
4. **Test of Doctrine** (1 Jn 4:1-6; 1 Tim 4:1-3; Isaiah 8:19-20). Does it line up?
5. **Test of Fruit** (Matthew 7:15-23). What is the fruit of the person's lifestyle?
6. **Test of Covetousness** (Micah 3:11; 2 Peter 2:1-3). Prophecy for financial gain?
7. **Test of Ministry to the People** (Jer. 23:18-23). Does it turn people to holiness?
8. **Test of Humility** (1 Corinthians 8:1). Does it produce humility or pride?
9. **Test of Value.** Does it confirm the greater value of the Word (logos)?
10. **Test of Confirmation.** Does it agree with your spirit, bring peace in your heart?
11. **Test of Control.** Does the prophesier manipulate, intimidate, or control by fear?
12. **Test of Accountability** (Mt. 12:343-37). Who is the prophesier accountable to?

How to Grow in the Gift:

1. Develop a devotional study and reading in the Word.
2. Develop a prayer life in tongues, journal what you hear God speak to you.
3. Develop a fasting lifestyle to humble your soul and increase your sensitivity to God's voice.
4. Read books on the gift of prophecy.
5. Study the lives of Old & New Testament prophets.
6. Come to the intercessory prayer nights and pre-service prayer.
7. Come to the monthly worship nights.
8. Join a ministry team.

Prophetic Ministry in the Service Near the End of Worship:

1. Be in the church long enough for the leadership to know you.
2. Submit your word to the pastor holding the microphone.
3. It's not an opportunity to preach, teach or rebuke, but to edify.
4. Avoid lengthy prophecies and using filler words.
5. Be in tune with the flow or theme of the worship and other prophecies given.

Symbolic Numbers:

- 1 – God, beginning, unity
- 2 – Union, division, witness
- 3 – Godhead, Divine completeness, perfect testimony
- 4 – Earth, creation, world
- 5 – Grace, atonement, life

6 – Man, beast, Satan
 7 – Perfection, completeness, maturity
 8 – New birth, new creation, new beginning
 9 – Fruit of the Spirit, Gifts, fruitfulness, finality
 10 – Testimony, Law, trials, responsibility, government
 11 – Judgment, disorder, disorganization, incompleteness
 12 – Divine government, apostolic fullness, governmental perfection
 13 – Depravity, rebellion, backsliding, apostasy
 14 – Deliverance, salvation, Passover
 15 – Rest
 16 – Love
 17 – Victory, spiritual order
 18 – Bondage
 19 – Faith
 20 – Redemption
 21 – Sinfulness
 22 – Light
 23 – Death
 24 – Priesthood, governmental perfection
 25 – Forgiveness of sins

26 – Gospel of Christ
 27 – Preaching the gospel
 28 – Eternal life
 29 – Departure
 30 – Consecration, mature ministry, blood of Christ
 40 – Trials, probation, testings
 50 – Holy Spirit, liberty, freedom, jubilee
 60 – Pride
 70 – Increase, multitude
 75 – Separation, cleansing, purification
 120 – End of all flesh, beginning of life

Symbolic Colors:

Amber – the glory of God
Black – sin, death, famine
Blue – heaven, heavenly, authority, Holy Spirit
Crimson or Scarlet – blood atonement, sacrifice, death
Purple – kingship, royalty
Red – war, bloodshed, death
White – purity, light, righteousness, holiness

Symbolic Creatures:

Birds (unclean) – evil spirits
Deer – swiftness, agility, beauty
Dove – Holy Spirit, gentleness, sacrifice
Eagle – swift flight, exchange of strength
Fish – souls of men
Horse – strength, swiftness, power
Lion – kingship, royalty, rulership, strength, courage, boldness
Serpent – subtlety, deception
Wolf – wicked and false teachers

Symbolic Objects:

Armour – warfare
Arrow – God’s word, or enemies accusations
Brass – judgment against sin
Chain – bondage, darkness
Gold - glory of God, deity
Horn – power, strength, defense
Oil – Holy Spirit anointing
Mountain – kingdom of God or the world
Pillar – support, stability, security
Plumbline or Rod – divine measuring standard
Rain – refreshing, revival
Sword – God’s Word
Trees – individuals, nations
Trumpet – prophetic voice

Recommended Resources for Growth in this Gift:

Interpreting the Symbols & Types – Kevin J. Conner
You May All Prophecy! - Steve Thompson
Growing in the Prophetic – Mike Bickle
The Blue Collar Prophet – Tom Stamman

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