

Session 1: Overview of the Nature of Man and Spiritual Gifts

I. THE NATURE OF MAN - OVERVIEW

- A. The creation of man is the highlight of the creation of God! (Gen. 1:26-27) Jesus, Son of God, showed us God's commitment to man by becoming a man for eternity! (Dan. 7:13; Rev. 1:18). *Man constitutes three parts: spirit, soul and body.* We are intricately designed telling us of the greatness of God! (1 Thes. 5:23; Gen. 2:7; Psalm 8:4; Psalm 139:13-14)

... may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Thes. 5:23)

I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works. (Psalm 139:14)

- B. Every person has a spirit and was given to man when God first created him (Gen. 2:7). It is our most truest and eternal part (Eccl. 3:11). After the fall of Adam our spirit became darkened and separated from God, but it was still present (Eph. 2:4-5).

Then the Lord God formed man of dust ... and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. (Gen. 2:7)

... He has put eternity in their hearts [spirit]... (Eccl. 3:11)

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses... (Eph. 2:4-5)

- C. The Bible calls us “dead” in our spirit when we are not in a right standing with God, He is not living in us and we do not know Him. True death is being separated from God, not just getting old or sick then dying. (Eph. 2:4-5; Luke 15:24; Mat. 8:22; 22:32).

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses... (Eph. 2:4-5)

Jesus said to him, “...let the dead [spiritually] bury their own dead.” (Mt. 8:22)

- D. Everyone will be raised again and receive a resurrected body, some to eternal life, some to eternal death (shame or condemnation). The Bible calls this eternal death the “second death” (John 5:28-29; Dan. 12:2-3; Rev. 20:11-15)

And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt. (Dan. 12:2-3)

28...for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice 29 and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation (John 5:28-29)

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- E. For the Christian believer, our *spirit* is in the position of heavenly authority in communion with the Living God who is now inside us! Our spirit man is the connection with heaven in our body. This “habitation of God” became possible by the atoning work of Jesus and His blood. We are a new creation. This reality is eternal life! (Mt. 27:51; John 3:16; 17:3; 1 Cor. 6:17; Eph. 2:5-6; 2 Cor. 5:17)

5 when we were dead in trespasses, [God] made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved). . . 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in [with] Christ Jesus. (Eph. 2:5-6)

. . .he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him. (1 Cor. 6:17)

And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. (John 17:3)

- F. Our *soul* is our mind, will, emotions, education, personality, etc... It is in process with receiving our salvation and walking in the grace freely given us through Jesus. This process is called sanctification. (Rom. 12:1-2; Rom. 6:13b; Luke 13:24; Heb. 12:4; 2 Cor. 5:10)

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (Rom. 12:2)

But present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members [your body, time, money, abilities, etc.] as instruments of righteousness to God. (Rom. 6:13b)

Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many...will not [enter]... (Lk. 13:24)

- G. Our *body* holds our spirit and soul, and the container in which we experience life. God created us to steward the physical realm around us and to bring the spiritual realm to the physical, which He ultimately will do in Jesus. We are accountable to God with what we do while in our body in this age. (Eph. 1:9-10; 2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Cor. 6:19; Rom. 12:1; 6:13b)

9...Having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, 10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth in Him. (Eph. 1:9-10)

...your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own (1 Cor. 6:19)

...we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. (2 Cor. 5:10)

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II. SPIRITUAL GIFTS: OVERVIEW

- A. God established spiritual gifts to profit the Church. It is to bring the riches of God from heaven to earth through His Church! Your spirit partnering with God's Spirit living in you will release God's heavenly activity on the earth! The goal is to edify others. (1 Cor. 12:7-10, Eph. 4:7-16 and Rom. 12:3-8)

⁷The manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: ⁸for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, ¹⁰to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. (1 Cor 12:7-10)

- B. There are three recognized categories of the nine gifts. The gifts often operate together. Many times they overlap or lead into the other. Jesus operated in all 9 gifts and to some measure we can as well! But there are some gifts God has given to us as strengths. Many times something is a strength (gift) when it is a passion God has placed in our hearts. It is our responsibility to then cultivate that passion into a strength.

Gifts of revelation reveal something: word of wisdom, word of knowledge, discerning of spirits.

Gifts of power do something: the gift of faith, working of miracles, and gifts of healings.

Gifts of inspiration say something: prophecy, tongues, and interpretation of tongues.

- C. God does not want us ignorant in how spiritual gifts work. This would be a huge travesty. Some of the results would be an immature Church, loss of knowledge of one's role in the Body, an unclear perspective of God, spiritual boredom, personal spiritual immaturity and lengthened time until Jesus returns.

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant. (1 Cor 12:1)

Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. (2 Tim. 1:6)

III. THE PROPHETIC GIFT - OVERVIEW

- A. All spiritual gifts are to be desired, *especially* prophecy. Everyone is supposed to desire to learn to move in prophecy, personally and corporately. It is not greedy to want spiritual gifts. God commands us to! It depends on why we are seeking them.

Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy. (1 Cor. 14:1)

Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues. (1 Cor. 14:39)

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- B. Prophecy is revelation from God. All Revelation always comes from God the Father (Mt 11:25,16:17; Gal 1:16; Phil 3:15), God the Son (Mt 11:27; Gal 1:12) or God the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 2:10; Eph 3:5).
- C. Prophecy shows us God’s blessing and how good He is. When there was no prophecy in the OT, it was a sign of judgement. God likes to reveal things to his children. He is waiting for us to consecrate ourselves and ask Him (Luke 11:9-13). He is a good Father (James 1:17). It His delight to give us the Kingdom. Prophecy is one of the treasures of the Kingdom!
- D. It comes “spontaneously” and is not prepared like teaching or preaching. It is also “controllable”.

29 Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge. 30 But if anything is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent. 31 For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged. 32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. (1 Corinthians 14:29-32)

- E. God appoints prophets in the early Church and at the present time. God encourages us all to prophesy. In the early church there were many prophets, but only one is recorded by name, Agabus.
1. God used the NT era prophets to strengthen, comfort, exhort and direct the Church which at that time was mostly in Israel, but then spread into the Gentile world. (Acts 11:27-29; Acts ; 1 Cor. 12:28; 1 Cor. 14:1-3, 29; Eph. 4:11)

27 And in these days prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch. 28 Then one of them, named Agabus... Acts 11:27-28

28 And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues. (1 Cor. 12:28)

Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge. (1 Cor. 14:29)

2. Agabus got prophesies correct. For example, he accurately saw the famine coming in Judea.

28 Then...Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar. 29 Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea. (Acts 11:28-29)

3. Agabus also made some errors in applying the prophecy he received. He was correct in what generally would happen to Paul, imprisonment, but missed how it would happen.
 - a. The Holy Spirit was urging Paul to go to Jerusalem. Paul knew that imprisonment would come from this decision.

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- b. Agabus saw that Paul would be bound as a prisoner but did not see clearly who would actually bind Paul.

10 And as we stayed many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. 11 When he had come to us, he took Paul's belt, bound his own hands and feet, and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'" (Acts 21:10-11)

31 Now as they [Jews] were seeking to kill him, news came to the commander of the garrison [a Roman] that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. 32 He immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down to them. ... Then the commander came near and took him [Paul], and commanded him [Paul] to be bound with two chains; and he asked who he was and what he had done. (Acts 21:31-34)

4. Therefore, prophesy in the NT and in the present age is imperfect, even with the most accurate of prophets. Paul calls this seeing through a glass darkly. Mirrors back then were polished brass. You could determine the form standing in front of it, but the details were hazy. Paul, who received some of the greatest revelations for the Church (2 Cor. 12:1-6) only saw in part, as did John the apostle and others. The OT prophets were judged by a different standard as the Lord gave them much clearer directives. The OT prophets functioned similarly in many ways to the NT apostles.

...we know in part and we prophecy in part... (1 Corinthians 13:9)

5. So we can take heart that if God used one of the most established prophets in the NT and Agabus missed it, we can be eager to learn to prophesy.
- F. It is not necessarily about the future, but can be about past, present or future things that God highlights.

II. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF PROPHECY?

- A. The end goal of the Church is our maturity and a full expression of Jesus in the Church on the earth. Jesus will return to a fully mature Bride on the earth. It is a fully mature Bride that will partner on the earth with Jesus to rid wickedness in the End Times.

7 But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. 8 Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men." . . . And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; 14 that ... may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—... (Eph. 4:7-8, 12-15)

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B. To edify and comfort believers. Here are some ways prophecy profits the Body. This is what “building up the Body” looks like.

3 But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men. 4 He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church. (1 Cor. 14:3-4)

1. Preparation or strengthening in important areas (1 Tim 1:18)
2. Practical application of scripture
3. Highlighting underused gift
4. Release or discernment of gifting (1 Tim 4:14)
5. Release physical or emotional healing
6. Confirmation of mission or ministry (Acts 13:1)
7. Exposure of Satan's tactics or secret sin (Acts 5:3; 1 Cor. 14:24-25)
8. Inspiration towards worship (1 Cor. 14:25)
9. Warnings (Acts 20:23, 21:10-11)

C. Other uses:

1. Evangelism of unbelievers (1 Cor. 14:24-25)
2. Guidance and direction (Gen. 41:25-32)
3. Prediction (Acts 11:28)

III. PROPHECY IS OUR INHERITANCE IN AN END-TIME GENERATION

A. Moses longed for a people *that would all prophesy*. He did not forbid the men who were not counted among the 70 leaders from prophesying. This instance foreshadowed when the Holy Spirit would anoint all believers to prophesy. We don't want fear, pride, anger, etc... that would inhibit prophecy!

27 And a young man ran and told Moses, and said, “Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.”28 So Joshua the son of Nun, Moses’ assistant, one of his choice men, answered and said, “Moses my lord, forbid them!”29 Then Moses said to him, “Are you zealous for my sake? Oh, that all the Lord’s people were prophets and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!” (Numbers 11:27-29)

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- B. Moses' prayer was answered in Acts 2. The Holy Spirit was poured out at Pentecost resulting in tongues, prophesy, dreams and visions, healings, salvations, bold proclamations of the gospel, unity, joy, etc... The apostles saw the events of their day as an initial fulfillment of Joel 2.

3 Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance... 17'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams. 18 And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy. (Acts 2:3,17-18; cf. Joel 2:28-29)

- C. The phrases in Joel, "in those days" and "before the day of the coming of the Lord" indicate that the fullness of this reality is yet to be. We know it will be an end-time phenomenon because the events in this passage have not happened yet. The Apostles saw it fulfilled but it was a downpayment. The end-time generation leading up to the Lord's return will see a greater outpouring of the Spirit than at Acts, resulting in a greater demonstration of the Spirit, salvations, healings, deliverances and rapid building of the Kingdom. We need to prepare for this in so many ways! Learning to move in the prophetic now will help prepare for the coming days when more will be given.

19 I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath: Blood and fire and vapor of smoke. 20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord. 21 And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.' (Acts 2:19-21; Joel 2:30-32)

- D. A second way we can be sure prophetic anointing will increase on the earth because God will raise up witnesses in the end times to stand during a time of deception and false prophetic witness. If God allows for a false prophet to deceive many on the earth, you can be sure he is raising up a TRUE prophetic witnesses on the earth to steer people to righteousness, display God's power, and bring many to the saving knowledge of Jesus. The Bible highlights two witnesses who will prophesy 1260 days during the Great Tribulation, when believers are persecuted and killed. Their testimony and faithfulness to God will encourage the Church. They will escape death for that time and stand before the demonic empowerment of the Antichrist. They will truly be walking in a greater measure of the Spirit. (Mt. 24:11; Mt. 7:15; Rev. 13:11-17; 16:13; Zech. 4; Rev. 11:3-12)

Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. (Mt. 24:11)

And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth. (Rev. 11:3)