

## Overview of Positions on Spiritual Gifts

Topic	Cessationist	Continuationist	Charismatic/Pentacostal
Spiritual Gifts	Some of the Spiritual Gifts in the New Testament were temporary, foundational <i>sign gifts</i> and have now ceased – are not given today	Though the Apostolic-prophetic foundation is complete, ALL of the gifts of the Spirit MAY still be distributed according to God's will and discerningly used for the edification of His people	All of the spiritual gifts and offices of the new testament are still available and all SHOULD be regularly exercised
Spirit Baptism	At Conversion	Experience varied in the transition age recorded in Acts due to the importance of Apostolic attestation. Thus accomplished it is firmly established by Scripture as happening once at conversion	Most seek regular baptisms or at least a 2 <sup>nd</sup> blessing - baptism of the Holy Spirit that comes after conversion
Spirit Filling	Repeatable	Repeatable – emphasis on boldness and encouragement to SPEAK.	Repeatable – tend to emphasize emotions and experiences with an inclination toward the phenomenal (mystical & miraculous)
Prophecy	Ceased – Not done today	Not a “word from God”. The N.T. gift of prophecy is unclear, non-authoritative and to be subjected to Scriptural scrutiny. It is not doctrine or commands.	Is deemed a “word from God”. Though doctrinally considered less than Scripture in practice it often substitutes for or even supplants God's Word.
Tongues	Ceased – Not done today	Real Languages. The spiritual gift of tongues, biblically understood and used always involves, at minimum, understanding of the speaker and has strict parameters for public use. It is not for self-edification as some have misunderstood 1 Corinthians 14 to mean.	Allow for <i>heavenly</i> or <i>angelic</i> languages (heart or prayer languages) or even just random meaningless syllables considered to be at times our Spirit praying without the mind or the Spirit communicating with God in wordless utterances. Sometimes used with biblical constraints other times used without granting the <i>Spirit</i> freedom.
Miracles & Healings	Ceased as a gift today. God still heals and does miraculous things.	This gift is not exercised at the will of any person but only at the will of God. Nor is it central or essential	Meetings are often held where a gifted person is expected to be able to exercise these things – thus not waiting upon the Spirit's work but expecting (at times demanding) it.
Pattern and Tone	These things are not a part in gathering	A careful biblical balance is sought. The exercise of gifts of the Spirit are part of the normal life of the church. Growth in grace and knowledge, exercise of love and encouragement are the priorities with the expectation the various gifts will be used by those they are given to in the ordinary flow of life and ministry. <i>Pursuing daily Faithfulness</i>	An imbalance overemphasis prevails. The exercise of the gifts of the Spirit are a Priority. Taking the title – Charismatic/Pentecostal declares a priority. There is a over-eagerness that at times is willing to put aside the reading of Scripture, preaching and other essentials to focus on the exercise of <i>gifts. Pursuing frequent Experiences.</i>

\*Note there is some variation within the camps. Some Charismatic/Pentecostals might be more like Conscientious Continuationists in some areas. The chart is designed to present the most prevalent views of the groups designated.

## A Concise Summary Chart of Spiritual Offices & Gifts

<i>Spiritual Gift</i>	<i>Key Texts</i>	<i>Concise Definition</i>	<i>Practical Implications</i>
Apostles ἀπόστολος	1 Cor. 12:28 Eph. 4:11 Luke 6:13 Acts 1:21-26 Acts 22:14ff 1 Cor. 15:8 Eph. 3:5 2 Pet. 3:2	Those chosen by Christ as eyewitnesses to His resurrection and empowered as authoritative prophets and spokesman for Christ. There are no new apostles today, the original biblical apostles still serve this function through the N.T.	We have the authoritative New Testament Scriptures directing us in truth by being the authoritative rule and guidelines for all that we believe and do. That be which we measure and test all else.
Prophets - προφήτης Prophecy - προφητεία	1 Cor. 12:10 1 Cor. 12:28 Rom. 12:6 Eph. 4:11 Acts 21 1 Cor. 14:36-40	N.T. Prophets are those who are given indications and less clear non-authoritative revelations that may serve (when properly tested) as encouragement, warnings, convictions or reminders.	This gift being non-authoritative can be exercised by many today, but is always subject to the authority of the Apostolic-Prophets, that is, the New Testament.
Pastors –Teachers - Elders ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους πρεσβύτερος (elders - leaders/pastors) ἐπίσκοπος (overseers, pastors/bishops) [all terms refer to the same small groups of pastors-elders-overseers-leaders that had been appointed in each N.T. church]	1 Cor. 12:28 Rom. 12:7 Eph. 4:11 Acts 14:23 Acts 20:28 Titus 1:5 2 Tim. 4:2	Given to shepherd and guide the church and they are to do this through the faithful teaching (explaining and applying) of the Word of God.	With the physical absence of Apostles today, their primary role in the church is continued by the Pastors-Teachers submission to and compliance with the Word of God.
Teachers - διδάσκαλος Teaching - διδασκαλία	1 Cor. 12:28 Rom. 12:7 Col. 3:16	There are those other than the Pastors who have the gift of teaching and can serve the Lord in exercising this gift.	Each must exercise teaching in their proper roles and with faithfulness to the Word. The Elders (Pastors) are responsible to see to this.
Exhortation/encouragement παρακαλέω παράκλησις	Rom. 12:8 Heb. 10:25	One who calls and urges people to active obedience and also comforts those who are faithful.	This comes to us not only in the work of preaching, but we need many people personally exercising this gift.
Serving/Ministry/Helping ἀντίλημψις and διακονία	1 Cor. 12:28 Rom. 12:7 1 Pet. 4:11	Those who are not just available, but active in seen and unseen, pleasant and unpleasant, public and private services that help the church and its members.	All of the work and needs of the church are met by the voluntary services of God's people.
Giving/Contributing μεταδίδωμι	Rom. 12:8 2 Cor. 8:2ff 2 Cor. 9:7ff	Those who give with great delight and often beyond their normal capacity or ability, even sacrificially for the needs of the church and its members	The needs of the church and those members in need are met by such generosity.
Leading/Ruling προΐστημι	Rom. 12:8 1 Pet. 5:1-2 1 Tim. 5:17 Heb. 13:17	Primarily of the Pastors/Elders, but also delegated roles, especially doing their work with diligence.	The hard work and responsibility for leading is done with due diligence and effort as well as in dependence upon and submission to the Spirit and Truth.
	1 Cor. 12:28	Again primarily of the	Ordering, planning and

Administrating κυβέρνησις	Titus 1:5 1 Cor. 14:40	Pastors/Elders but also others using such skills under the oversight and to the great benefit of the leadership and body.	organizing skills engaged for the coordination and smooth functioning of ministries and meetings.
Showing Mercy ἐλεέω	Rom. 12:8 Gal. 6:2 Jude 22-23	Those who are especially sympathetic to the hurts, needs and weaknesses of others and show care, concern and compassion	This is how God keeps his body sure and safe, none fall through the cracks or get left behind.
Evangelism εὐαγγελιστής	Eph. 4:11 2 Tim. 4:5 Act 21:8	Those who have a heightened ability to bring the gospel frequently into conversation and frequently seek to share with more.	This is how we see God seeking and saving the lost and building His church.
Word of Wisdom λόγος σοφίας	1 Cor. 12:8	Spirit assisted insight into a matter, concern or issue	Helpful in many practical situations.
Word of Knowledge λόγος γνώσεως	1 Cor. 12:8	Spirit facilitated information related to a person, matter or issue	Helpful in many practical situations.
Faith - πίστις	1 Cor. 12:9 Mat. 17:20 Luke 17:5-6 Eph. 2:8-9 Heb. 11:33 Heb. 11:36ff	Those who help the body weather the storms because they are so firmly fixed upon the Rock by faith, also the great confidence wrought in the heart of those called to attempt great things and take great risks for the cause of God	This is not blind faith or believing what I want, but a Spirit wrought sense of conviction, surety and confidence that helps us to keep the path of faithfulness and service.
Healing - ἰαμα	1 Cor. 12:9 1 Cor. 12:28	Curing of illnesses and maladies	Not every time and every illness, but subject to God's sovereign will. (2 Tim 4:20; 1 Tim 5:23; <b>2 Cor. 12:7-10</b> )
Miracles - Power δύναμις,	1 Cor. 12:10 1 Cor. 12:28	Doing works of power: could include casting out demons, physical deliverance from distress, judgment of enemies, removal of obstacles etc.	This could include occasional mighty feats that display God's power. (Acts 13:11; 14:19; 20:9)
Discerning of Spirits διακρίσεις πνευμάτων	1 Cor. 12:10 1 John 4:1	The spirit wrought sensitivity to the presence and working of evil spirits.	Useful for sounding an alarm calling us to "test" and keep people from following deceptions.
Tongues - γλώσσα	1 Cor. 12:10 1 Cor. 12:28 1 Cor. 12:30 Acts 2, 10, 19 1 Cor. 14 * 1 Cor. 14:9 and 14:14-15 1 Cor. 14:22	The enablement given to some (not all) to speak in <u>real</u> languages, previously unknown or positively enhanced and to declare praises & the power and person of God. Sign to unbelievers.	This could be useful in multi-linguistic regions or during travels as a sign for unbelievers who understand or even for unbelievers within the assembly if there is a translator so that all can understand.
Interpretation - ἑρμηνεία	1 Cor. 12:10 1 Cor. 14:13 and 14:27	Being able to understand and translate the "tongue" into the language of those present during the speaking in tongues/other languages.	Either the natural ability or special enablement to understand and relate that foreign tongue to the people present.

## Key passages noting the proper perspective, purpose and practice of Spiritual Gifts.

**1 Corinthians 12:7** <sup>7</sup> To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good...<sup>11</sup> **All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apports to each one individually as he wills.** <sup>12</sup> For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. <sup>13</sup> For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body- Jews or Greeks, slaves<sup>1</sup> or free- and all were made to drink of one Spirit. <sup>14</sup> For the body does not consist of one member but of many. <sup>15</sup> If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. <sup>16</sup> And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. <sup>17</sup> If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? <sup>18</sup> But as it is, **God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose.** <sup>19</sup> If all were a single member, where would the body be? <sup>20</sup> As it is, there are many parts,<sup>1</sup> yet one body. <sup>21</sup> The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." <sup>22</sup> On the contrary, **the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable,** <sup>23</sup> and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unrepresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, <sup>24</sup> which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, <sup>25</sup> that there may be no division in the body, but that **the members may have the same care for one another.** <sup>26</sup> If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. <sup>27</sup> Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it...<sup>31</sup> **But earnestly desire the higher gifts.** And I will show you a still more excellent way. (ESV)

**Romans 12:3-6** <sup>3</sup> For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you **not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think,** but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith **that God has assigned.** <sup>4</sup> For as in one body we have many members,<sup>1</sup> and the members do not all have the same function, <sup>5</sup> so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. <sup>6</sup> **Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them...**(ESV)

**1 Peter 4:10-11** <sup>10</sup> Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, **serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.** <sup>11</sup> Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, **so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ.** To him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen. (NRSV)

If you desire a particular spiritual gift that is good we are told to 'earnestly desire' (1Cor. 12:31) the higher gifts. This comes at the end of a passage that is explaining that all gifts are important and those that seem weaker are indispensable. As with all things we must test our motives. Do we want the visible, prominent and public gifts for personal and prideful reasons? If so we should not expect such desires to be granted. If I have only one hand, but two feet, I do not need a third foot, but another hand. In like manner the higher gift in each church will be different and changing. What are the things that are most needed by the body. We do not learn about our spiritual gift by taking a test. This makes 'gifting' about us, rather than about God who assigns them and the Spirit who apports them as He wills. A real desire for gifts is a love for the brothers and sisters in faith and the eagerness to be used of God in any way that He would desire. So, instead of looking inside for a gift, look outside for a need and then ask God to give you the grace and power to be able to service that need for the sake of the body and that He may be glorified!

APOSTLES:

Ephesians 3:5 which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.

2 Peter 3:2 that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles,

#### PROPHETS:

1 Corinthians 14:36 Or was it from you that the word of God came? Or are you the only ones it has reached? <sup>37</sup> If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that the things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord. <sup>38</sup> If anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized. <sup>39</sup> So, my brothers, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. <sup>40</sup> But all things should be done decently and in order.

#### Pastors-Teachers:

Acts 14:23 And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

Acts 20:28 Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God,<sup>1</sup> which he obtained with his own blood.

Titus 1:5 This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you-

2 Timothy 4:2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.

*1 Timothy 3:2 <sup>2</sup> Therefore an overseer<sup>1</sup> must be above reproach, the husband of one wife,<sup>2</sup> sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach...*

*Titus 1:9 <sup>9</sup> He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound<sup>1</sup> doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.*

#### Teachers:

Colossians 3:16-17 <sup>16</sup> Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. <sup>17</sup> And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

#### Exhortation:

Romans 12:8 <sup>8</sup> the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads,<sup>1</sup> with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

Hebrews 10:25 <sup>25</sup> not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

#### Serving:

1 Peter 4:11 ... as one who serves by the strength that God supplies- in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

#### Giving:

Romans 12:8 <sup>8</sup> the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads,<sup>1</sup> with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

2 Corinthians 8:2-5 <sup>2</sup> for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. <sup>3</sup> For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own free will, <sup>4</sup> begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints- <sup>5</sup> and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us.

2 Corinthians 9:7 <sup>7</sup> Each one must give as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

#### Leading:

Romans 12:8 <sup>8</sup> the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads,<sup>1</sup> with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

1 Peter 5:1-3 1 Peter 5:1 So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: <sup>2</sup> shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight,<sup>1</sup> not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you;<sup>2</sup> not for shameful gain, but eagerly; <sup>3</sup> not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.

1 Timothy 5:17 <sup>17</sup> Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.

Hebrews 13:17 <sup>17</sup> Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

#### Administrating:

Titus 1:5 <sup>5</sup> This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you-

1 Corinthians 14:40 <sup>40</sup> But all things should be done decently and in order.

#### Showing Mercy:

Romans 12:8 <sup>8</sup> the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads,<sup>1</sup> with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

Galatians 6:2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Jude 1:22 And have mercy on those who doubt; <sup>23</sup> save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment<sup>1</sup> stained by the flesh.

## Evangelism:

2 Timothy 4:5 As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

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

## Word of Wisdom & Knowledge:

1 Corinthians 12:8 To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit,

## Faith:

Matthew 17:20 He said to them, "Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you."<sup>1</sup>

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,<sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Hebrews 11:33 who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

Hebrews 11:36-39<sup>36</sup> Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment.<sup>37</sup> They were stoned, they were sawn in two,<sup>1</sup> they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated-<sup>38</sup> of whom the world was not worthy- wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.<sup>39</sup> And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised,

## Healing:

2 Timothy 4:20<sup>20</sup> Erastus remained at Corinth, and I left Trophimus, who was ill, at Miletus.

1 Timothy 5:23<sup>23</sup> (No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments.)

2 Corinthians 12:7-10<sup>7</sup> So to keep me from being too elated by the surpassing greatness of the revelations,<sup>1</sup> a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from being too elated.<sup>8</sup> Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me.<sup>9</sup> But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.<sup>10</sup> For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

James 5:14 <sup>14</sup> Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.

#### Miracles:

Acts 13:8-12 <sup>8</sup> But Elymas the magician (for that is the meaning of his name) opposed them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. <sup>9</sup> But Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him <sup>10</sup> and said, "You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord? <sup>11</sup> And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and unable to see the sun for a time." Immediately mist and darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking people to lead him by the hand. <sup>12</sup> Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had occurred, for he was astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

Acts 14:19-20 <sup>19</sup> But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having persuaded the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead. <sup>20</sup> But when the disciples gathered about him, he rose up and entered the city, and on the next day he went on with Barnabas to Derbe.

Acts 20:9-10 <sup>9</sup> And a young man named Eutychus, sitting at the window, sank into a deep sleep as Paul talked still longer. And being overcome by sleep, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead. <sup>10</sup> But Paul went down and bent over him, and taking him in his arms, said, "Do not be alarmed, for his life is in him."

#### Discerning of Spirits:

1 Corinthians 12:10 <sup>10</sup> to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

1 John 4:1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.

#### Tongues:

1 Corinthians 14:9 <sup>9</sup> So with yourselves, if with your tongue you utter speech that is not intelligible, how will anyone know what is said? For you will be speaking into the air.

1 Corinthians 14:14-15 <sup>14</sup> For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful. <sup>15</sup> What am I to do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with my mind also; I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also.

1 Corinthians 14:22 <sup>22</sup> Thus tongues are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers, while prophecy is a sign<sup>1</sup> not for unbelievers but for believers.

#### Interpretation:

1 Corinthians 14:27 <sup>27</sup> If any speak in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn, and let someone interpret.

*Excerpt from section of notes articulating a Cautious Continuationist position of Spirit Baptism & Filling, Apostleship & Prophecy*



...accordingly the 'Cessationist' position, held by many solid and dedicated bible based churches, believes that such *miraculous/revelatory* gifts have entirely ceased. They believe this, not only for the practical reasons of rejecting false ministers and ministries, but because they are convinced of the biblical and historical arguments that we have considered and again summarized below. I will here introduce the only other position that could be considered exegetically viable - we'll call it's adherents *conservative (conscientious) continuationists*.

In the Cessationist table column we'll restate their foundational arguments whereas in the Conservative Continuationist table column we'll see their basic responses or reservations to the Cessationist conclusions.

Cessationist	Conservative Continuationist
1. In Acts the signs and wonders are often spoken of as a special ministry of the Apostles (2:43; 5:12; 14:3; 15:12), who serve to lay the foundation for the church (Eph. 2:20, many add prophets as foundational also.)	1. In Acts we find signs and wonders being done by some who were not Apostles – Stephen (6:8) and Philip (8:6). The apostolic-prophetic foundation is true, but this does not preclude signs and wonders being done through others.
2. Paul defends his Apostleship in 2 Corinthians 12:12 by asserting his signs and wonders ministry.	2. Paul claims that he performed the “signs of an Apostle” (nominative) ...with signs and wonders (dative). Grammatically, Paul is talking about two different things 1- the signs of an apostle; 2 – signs and wonders. (NIV misses the grammar)
3. It is further viewed as foundational, apostolic and historic in light of Heb. 2:4 which looks back on God’s attesting through miracles.	3. This verse proves that God bore witness to the Gospel through the Lord and those who heard (the apostles and possibly others) by signs and wonders and various miracles. Though this is true and may speak of a greater measure of such activity it does not speak of it as ended.
4. Church history does not record any who healed as Christ and the Apostles did as recorded in Scripture. The healings were complete, most often immediate, included even visible and remarkable restorations. Modern healers and their healings are often partial, temporary and mostly consist of disputable claims (back-pain, headaches, etc.)	4. Church history is helpful but it is not our guide. The Bible records passages that expect healings both outside of the work of the Apostles and listed them among the other relevant gifts that we use today such as administration. (1 Cor. 12:7-11, 28-31; Gal. 3:5; James 5:14-16)
5. The Bible says that tongues and prophecy will cease when the perfect comes (1 Cor. 13:8-10) and the New Testament is the perfect revelation of God thus other “revelatory” gifts have now finished.	5. We agree that new “revelation” in this “authoritative Scripture” sense has ended with the N. T., but 1 Cor. 13:12 tells us that the perfect will be when we are face to face and thus is not the completion of the Bible, but the return of Christ. So the gifts will continue until we see “face to face” and “know fully” which is only upon the return of Christ.

Conservative (Cautious/Guarded) Continuationists argue for the acceptance of the following verses as having the same validity of instruction and application to us today as it did to the church during the age of the apostles. (emphasis added)

1 Corinthians 12:31 But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

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

1 Corinthians 14:37-40 <sup>37</sup> If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that the things **I am writing to you are a command of the Lord.** <sup>38</sup> If anyone does not recognize this, he is not

recognized. <sup>39</sup> So, my brothers, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. <sup>40</sup> But all things should be done decently and in order.

1 Thessalonians 5:19-22 <sup>19</sup> Do not quench the Spirit. <sup>20</sup> Do not despise prophecies, <sup>21</sup> but test everything; hold fast what is good. <sup>22</sup> Abstain from every form of evil.

It must be noted here that when the Conservative Continuationist does not cease their study of the gifts for the Spirit with a conclusion of the continuing availability or validity of all the gifts but continues to allow the Scriptures to define, describe and display them to us. In doing so many if not most and possibly all of the sensationalized claims of “gifts” may not (will not) survive the scrutiny. By stating that they believe that the Scriptures teach and even encourage the proper use of all biblical spiritual gifts, it does not in any way imply or intend any endorsement of any of the practices in the modern gift-oriented churches. Since we are to be led by the Spirit through the Word as our rule of faith and practice - this will also include taking the whole counsel of the Word of God into account in the comprehensive consideration of spiritual gifts.

## **Spirit-Baptized; Spirit-Filled**

### **The Baptism in and Filling with the Spirit**

(these notes are intended as a basic overview outline, the detailed discussion will be oral)

For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body-  
Jews or Greeks, slaves or free-  
and all were made to drink of one Spirit.  
1 Corinthians 12:13 (ESV)

### **Spirit Baptism; Being Baptized with the Holy Spirit**

With this subject we touch upon an area where emotion and experience often control people's conclusions. When we want to be able to discern our experience, and especially God's will and design, we need to turn to the Scriptures. Let us learn from the Word about the definitions and distinctions between the "Baptism in the Spirit" and the "Filling with the Spirit".

*Matthew 3:10 The axe is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. 11 "I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. **He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.** 12 His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire." (Luke 3:16-17, without "fire" - Mark 1:8;; John 1:33)*

αὐτὸς ὑμᾶς βαπτίσει ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ (Koine Greek)

He - you - will baptize - in - Spirit - Holy (English)

Lui,- il vous - baptisera - du - Esprit - Saint (French)

All of these passages clearly state the ‘He’, which is Jesus, is the one who performs Spirit baptism (just as John is the one who performed baptism in/with water). John was immersing people into the water, whereas Jesus will be immersing people into the Holy Spirit. Here we should note that the phrase "Baptism **OF** the Holy Spirit" is not accurate and potentially misleading. It is a baptism of Jesus into/with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not the one baptizing, but what or rather who we are baptized into (ἐν) by Jesus Christ.

Whenever we deal with this subject it seems that much time is spent correcting misconceptions and errors. One of these we will briefly touch on is the "with fire". There are a number of groups today who think that this "fire" is a desirable thing, mistakenly linking it with "cloven tongues like as of fire" in Acts 2:3 and they imagine that this fire-like appearance bringing the gift of languages (tongues) is part of Spirit Baptism. When we study the Scriptures, we must follow the key principle that Scripture interprets Scripture, yet the Scripture in the immediate context bears more relevance than others, so before reading other passages into the one you are studying (which may not actually apply), we must read the verse in its context (the surrounding verses). The term "fire" is mentioned at the end of verse 10, 11, and 12. It becomes clear, if we let the text speak for itself instead of letting our creative mind tell us about the fire being some amazing, burning and energizing work of the Holy Spirit, we find that in the verse the "fire" is punishment of eternal fire.

*Matthew 25:41 <sup>41</sup> "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the **eternal fire** prepared for the devil and his angels.*

What this is clearly talking about is that Jesus will baptize (immerse) everybody, either in the Holy Spirit bringing them to eternal life in the Son, or in "fire", the lake of fire for eternal punishment (Rev. 20:15; Mat. 25:46). I have heard many fascinating stories of people who claim a tremendous "feeling" when they experience the "Baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire", though I do believe their account of the incident, I thank God that it the Baptism of the Holy Spirit alone and not the baptism with 'unquenchable fire' for the chaff.

The remaining verses that specifically mention Spirit-Baptism are:

*Acts 1:5 For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.*

Here the promise is baptism with the Holy Spirit (not fire), that they are instructed to wait for. When the Holy Spirit comes on them (sent by Christ, and the Father), they will receive power...to be witnesses...to the ends of the earth. In this lesson we will not attempt to study in detail the different degrees of power given by the Holy Spirit under the New Covenant (we will save that for a later time). This promise was fulfilled in the life of the Apostles on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) you may also take notice that in Acts 2:4ff they spoke in many languages (tongues) declaring as witnesses the wonders of God, to God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven.

We will note here that the day of Pentecost had **BOTH** the Baptism in the Spirit as well as the Filling with the Spirit (this is common, Acts 2:8...they were all filled with the Holy Spirit...). Yet, just because both were experienced in that occasion, we must not confuse them (as many do) because Spirit-Baptism is a once for all time event, whereas Spirit-Fillings are repeatable.

*Acts 2:38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

One very important aspect revealed in this passage is that, though it does not use the exact words "Baptism with the Holy Spirit", we see that this is a guarantee here. Those who truly repent (evidenced by the obedience of baptism) and have faith in Jesus Christ alone for the forgiveness of their sins "will receive" the gift of the Holy Spirit (λήμψεσθε verb indicative future middle 2nd person plural of the root λαμβάνω). This is clearly stated as a direct result and is the certainty of true faith and repentance. It is not, you might, you may, but you indeed will. Therefore all those who have truly repented and believed WILL

receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is not something that we seek or strive for. It is not just a possibility, nor is it a command, but a promise, and a fact.

Later in the book of Acts we read:

*Acts 10:47 "Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have."*

*Acts 11:16 Then I remembered what the Lord had said: 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'*

At Cornelius' house when they were converted through the ministry of the gospel, Peter recognized that they had "received the Holy Spirit just as we have" and that this was the ongoing fulfilment of Christ's promise to baptize with the Holy Spirit. Note again that this was not days, months or years after their conversion, but simultaneous with it (at the same time or at least part of a series of consecutive contemporaneous activities at the time of regeneration). Here also we find them speaking in other languages (tongues) praising God. Again, we would expect that if it was "just as we have" then the baptism with the Spirit brought the first experience of "filling of the Spirit" with it, just as the Apostles had experienced (and in Acts 2:4 it cites their "tongues" or languages as the result of the filling rather than baptism).

At this point we need to make some special points. 1) In Acts, there were some people who were already **converted** before the day of Pentecost. 2) This means that their circumstances, during an age of transition (from the Old to the New Covenant), were different from ours. 3) This age of transition was crucial for laying the foundation for an **international** (not ethnically or ritualistically Jewish) church.

The supposed "second blessing" and "laying on of hands" passages are in Acts 8 and 19. The passage in Acts 19 is clearly not a second blessing, because the people had not truly believed, having not heard about Jesus. Without going into too much detail Paul's expectation was that if they had believed in Jesus, then they would have received the Holy Spirit (Act 19:2-4), but these men had likely been baptized by someone who was a follower of John, and baptized them only in repentance, not repentance unto Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (not just for Jews, John 1:29, 36). In Acts 8 Peter and John came to Samaria where Philip had been preaching and laid hands on those who had "accepted the word of God"(Acts 8:14) and were even baptized (vs.12) but the "Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them (vs.16) "they received the Holy Spirit" when Peter and John place their hands on them (vs.17). This unique event gave Apostolic attestation to God's acceptance of even the Samaritans, those despised by the Jews (John 4:9). Even Acts 10, 11, and 19 are crucial Apostolic witnesses to God's inclusion of people from all nations, breaking Jewish traditions and expectations (Acts 10:28).

These accounts cannot be taken as "normative" or what we should expect as a pattern for the following reasons.

- ✓ Sometimes the Spirit was received with the laying on of hands (Acts 8, 19)
- ✓ Sometimes the Spirit was received without laying of hands (Acts 2, 10)
- ✓ Sometimes the Spirit came before water baptism (Acts 10)
- ✓ Sometimes the Spirit came after water baptism (Acts 8, 19)
- ✓ Sometimes the Spirit came evidence by tongues/languages (Acts 2, 10, 19)
- ✓ Sometimes the Spirit came without tongues (Acts 2, 8)

This is just a sampling of these events. The purpose is to show that during this unique age, the transition between the old covenant and the new covenant. Some unique things happened, but in God's good plan, things happened differently at different places so that we could not make a "pattern" of these unique events during this transitional time period.

The didactic (teaching) passages related to this teaching come to us later as the new covenant has been firmly established. They are few in number but remarkably clear.

*For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body- Jews or Greeks, slaves or free- and all were made to drink of one Spirit. 1 Corinthians 12:13 (ESV)*

With unequalled clarity, the New Covenant concept of Spirit Baptism takes place when we are brought into the body of Christ. With the age of transition complete, we can now expect and understand that Baptism in or with the Spirit is part of our Conversion. Thus, everyone who is truly a part of the body of Christ has been baptized in the Spirit, 1 Corinthians 12:13 demands this understanding. Many see Romans 6 as a parallel to water baptism (symbolically), but expressly speaking about Spirit Baptism.

*Romans 6:3 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup> We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. <sup>5</sup> If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. <sup>6</sup> For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin--*

This is made even clearer, if you belong to Christ, the Spirit of Christ (God) lives in you.

*Romans 8:9 You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. <sup>10</sup> But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup> And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.*

Here are just a few more important verses related to this subject.

*Galatians 3:27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.*

*Colossians 2:11 In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, <sup>12</sup> having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.*

*John 6:63 The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.*

*John 7:37 On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. <sup>38</sup> Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." <sup>39</sup> By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.*

## Filling with the Spirit; or Being Filled with the Spirit

This is another fascinating subject, and fraught with many misunderstandings. It seems so often we go to the Scripture to try to prove or justify our experience rather than to test, discern and evaluate it. The other error is to try to find some verses that seem to support what we believe rather than a thorough study and search of Scripture to learn what the Bible truly teaches. A few things we will note in passing is that neither Baptism with the Spirit or Filling with the Spirit have any link to the modern phenomena called "Slain in the Spirit". We cannot really address this subject tonight, but it should be enough to note that this "experience" never happened to Christ, the Apostles or anyone else in the church established in accord with the Word of God. There is not a single example of it, or teaching about it in the Word. Historically it has been found in pagan religions, cults and the occult, but not in anything considered "Christian" until recently. Therefore, knowing that God has revealed everything necessary for life and godliness and thoroughly equips us for every good work through the Word (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3), we know that this experience (common in many religions and psychological methodologies) is not part of God's plan for His church.

First we have to note that unlike Baptism with the Spirit, the filling of the Spirit was experienced before the day of Pentecost (Exodus 31:3; 35:31; Deut. 34:9; Micah 3:8; Luke 1:15, 41, 67).

The temporary filling of the Spirit was given by God for specific tasks. The filling of the Spirit was a divine enablement to serve or to speak. (Num. 24:2; Judges 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 14:6, 19; 15:14; 1 Sam. 10:10; Ezek 11:5 etc.)

We find that this is still the case in the New Covenant age. (each verse to be discussed in it's context by lecture)

*Acts 2:4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them... 14 Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say.*

*Acts 4:8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people!*

The experience of filling is temporary and repeatable, happening again and again. It happened on the day of Pentecost to Peter and John and again in Acts 4:8 after Peter and John's release from prison.

***Acts 4:31 After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.***

It seems clear that under the New Covenant, which is a spiritual covenant, the fillings of the Spirit is most clearly associated with boldness to speak the Word of God, or praises to God. Occasionally this speaking was done in various languages (tongues) but most often it was the boldness and courage to speak, accompanied with a powerful emotional impact as well. Consider the following verses in context (to be done orally)

*Acts 13:9 Then Saul, who was also called Paul, **filled with the Holy Spirit**, looked straight at Elymas and said, <sup>10</sup> and said, "You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord?"*

*Acts 13:52 And the disciples were **filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit**.*

Unlike Baptism in the Spirit, which happens once and makes us members of the Body of Christ. This repeated experience of filling is something that we are commanded to pursue.

*Ephesians 5:18 Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.<sup>19</sup> Speak (or Speaking, present active verb) to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord,<sup>20</sup> always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

The result of this filling again is the verbal praise and speaking forth concerning God, even to one another (not in tongues here). It's result is VERBAL service. It is primarily EQUIPING not a mystical experience.

If we are commanded to seek this filling, How do we find it or how do we get filled?

The parallel teaching that has the same response or effect as Spirit filling is:

*Colossians 3:16-17<sup>16</sup> Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.<sup>17</sup> And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

Here we see a greater expanse of the speaking expanded from singing to include teaching and admonishing. The way that we "drink" to be "filled" with the Spirit is to "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly"! This is also in the imperative, it is a command. The command is in the present active tense meaning that you must continually, actively and persistently have the Word of Christ "living within" you. Clearly this affects your whole way of living, see verse 17. We obey the commandment by learning from the preaching, teaching or reading of God's Word, responding to the admonitions, meditating (concentrated contemplation) upon the Word, and through prayerful dependence upon the power of the Spirit to lead us through His Word.

Filling with the Spirit may affect our emotions but that is not what we are seeking. It may fill us with joy, peace, commitment, zeal, holy passion and spiritual hunger though not always see Acts 13:9ff. Some seem to confuse any stirring of their spirit (emotions, spiritual inclinations) with the filling of the Spirit. It may be the Spirit stirring our spirit but that does not mean it is the 'filling'. Further these stirrings are not what we pursue for faithful service. Each filling for (speaking) service is temporary and must be replenished. We are commanded to do what is necessary to make this an ongoing experience rather than merely occasional. We cannot and must not live from experience to experience, but must learn to make this a pattern for life. When we stop the inflow and internal distribution of the Word, we cease to have the boldness, courage and strength to live as we ought to in this present world.

**Note:** It would appear that there is also a concept called "full of the Spirit" in Acts 6:3, 5; 11:24 which likely indicates an individual who manifests the fruit of the Spirit, has a life led by the Spirit and is characterized by regular fillings of the Spirit.

## REVIEW

**Baptism in/with the Spirit:** Once for all time, at conversion, whereby Christ immerses us in the Holy Spirit making us members of the Body of Christ. In this present age we find that this is not a second or later experience but "part of the package" of our conversion experience. It is permanent and it is a guarantee and seal until the day of redemptions bringing with it the influence of the Spirit (training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, Titus 2:12) This appears to come together with our first Filling with the Spirit.

**Filling in/with the Spirit:** A secondary or subsequent and repeatable experience which we are commanded by God to pursue, and instructed by God on how to receive these fillings. The result is a greater boldness and enablement for speaking forth the things of God, a stirring of our spirit in worship, awe and adoration of God to the encouragement and admonition of our fellow believers or as a call to Christ of the lost.

Taken together these provide the New Covenant believer with a profound strengthening to live a lifestyle of obedience, characterized by joy, peace, zeal, integrity and thankfulness etc.

May God grant us a deeper understanding and ongoing experience of these magnificent endowments?

## **An Apostle of Jesus Christ**

And he gave the **apostles**  
the prophets, the evangelists,  
the pastors and teachers,  
Ephesians 4:11

We are told in the Scriptures that He (God) gave the apostles...together with others to the church. In Ephesians 4 it speaks of the integral role of apostles in the equipping of the saints for ministry and building them up in true knowledge and spiritual maturity so that they are not lead astray by "every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes." (Ephesians 4:14)

This being the case we understand the 'why' God gave Apostles, we also need to investigate the 'what' an Apostle is and 'who' the Apostles are or were.

An additional reason why it is necessary to give a proper study and consideration to the question of Apostleship is because of the following warning:

*2 Corinthians 11:13 For such men are **false apostles**, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.*

Just as there were true apostles of Christ there would be false apostles, well disguised and most likely the key sources of the winds of doctrine, by human cunning and by craftiness in deceitful schemes." So we need to know this for our progress as well as our protection.

In my investigation I found that various forms of the word **ἀπόστολος** appear 80 times in 79 verses in the Greek New Testament. Of these 80 times 68 of them are written by Paul and Luke, and only 3 occurrences (Jn.13:16; 2 Cor. 8:23; Phil. 2:25) seem to refer to something other than the 12 and a few special addition (Matthias, James the brother of the Lord, Paul, Barnabas...). One reference was referring to Christ himself (Heb. 3:1).



The basic sense of this word can be understood as that of a *messenger, delegate, or one who has been given responsibility and authority of speak on behalf of another*. Another common definition is ‘sent one’, yet it conveys more than just being sent, but sent for a specific purpose as a representative with specific duties to exercise. Hence we find

2 Corinthians 8:23 As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker for your benefit. And as for our brothers, they are **messengers<sup>1</sup> of the churches**, the glory of Christ. [ESV Notes (1) Greek *apostles*]

“**representatives** of the churches” *NIV*

“**messengers** of the churches” *KJV, NRSV, NASV*

“**les envoyés des Églises**” *LSG (Louis Segond)*

An important point to note in this verse is that these individuals referred to in the Greek as apostles are given the explanatory phrase “of the churches”. This is crucial because Apostles **of Jesus Christ** are His apostles to the churches. We find the same things in the other supposedly broader use of the term.

*Philippians 2:25 I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need,*

Here again we find that Epaphroditus is “your messenger and minister”. He is an ‘apostle’ or sent delegate of the church of Philippi, not an Apostle of Jesus Christ. This distinction is vital to understanding what the Bible teaches about the Apostles given by God, appointed by Christ himself and the distinctive role that they were given to fulfil for the sake of God’s people, the church.

So often when we hear the word ‘disciples’ we think of the 12 apostles. This is something we have to overcome, because Jesus had a much larger following of disciples. They are referred to occasionally as the ‘twelve disciples’ (Mat. 10:1; 11:1; 20:17) noting their special discipleship relationship with Christ, but the term disciples is used more commonly and broadly of believers and followers whereas the distinctive description ‘apostle’ (of Christ) designates certain individuals among the disciples who were called to this special role. Now let’s consider their first appointment.

*Luke 6:12 In these days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God. <sup>13</sup> And when day came, he called his disciples and chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles...(see also Mark 3:13ff, Mat. 10:1-2)*

We would have concluded at this point that these men and only these men were and would ever be Apostles, but the Word of God adds more than these, also by Christ’s appointment and meeting the required criteria.

For the appointment of a replacement for Judas the required one who had been with them from the time of Jesus’ baptism till the resurrection (Acts 1:21-22) For this special role the person had to be “a witness to his resurrection”. They had to have seen with their own eyes the risen Son of God. (end vs. 22). The selection though was not made by the Apostles but by the Lord (Acts 1:24-26) It is this non-negotiable qualification that was also met by Paul (Saul) on the road to Damascus and he makes this a central point in his defense of his apostleship.

*1 Corinthians 9:1 Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not you my workmanship in the Lord?*

This gives us the 3 critical qualifications of an Apostle:

1. He must have actually seen Jesus Christ after the resurrection (or ascension).
2. He must get his teaching-instruction-message directly from Jesus.
3. He must be appointed, specially designated by Christ (God).

We can see that Paul clearly claims these things for himself and he must if he is to be an apostle.

*Galatians 1:11-17* <sup>11</sup> For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel.<sup>1</sup> <sup>12</sup> For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ...I did not immediately consult with anyone;<sup>2</sup> <sup>17</sup> nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me...

*1 Timothy 1:1* Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope,

We find that Paul's appointment was special and unique.

*Acts 22:14-15* <sup>14</sup> And he said, 'The **God** of our fathers **appointed you** to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear a voice from his mouth; <sup>15</sup> for you will be a witness for him to everyone of what you have seen and heard.

Because of these factors only Apostles were fit to set forth the authoritative word of God for us which we now have in the form of the New Testament (each written or affirmed by Apostles). Paul was chosen to, among other things, "see the Righteous One". This special requirement for Apostleship was not given or intended for all.

*Acts 10:40-42* <sup>40</sup> but **God raised him** on the third day and **made him to appear,** <sup>41</sup> not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. <sup>42</sup> And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead.

What about those who claim to be Apostles today? To answer this question we merely have to evaluate their claim on the according to the qualifications. The first question is "Have they actually seen the risen Jesus?" Clearly the Bible tells us that he did not appear to all, but to those specially chosen to be witnesses. Of course, those who claim to be apostles today also claim a special appointment and claim to have seen and met with Jesus personally and visibly. How do we evaluate their claims? Does the Bible have anything to say about this? Yes it does.

There were a little of 500 potential candidates meeting qualification number 1 for Apostleship

*1 Corinthians 15:4-8* <sup>4</sup> that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, <sup>5</sup> and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. <sup>6</sup> Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. <sup>7</sup> Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. <sup>8</sup> **Last of all,** as to one untimely born, **he appeared also to me.**

Here's a basic list (not intended to be comprehensive or name every individual)

1. Cephas (Peter)
2. the twelve
3. more than 500 brothers at one time

4. James (the brother of Jesus according to the flesh)
5. all the apostles
6. Last of all – Paul

He speaks of himself as being untimely born because he was not present during all of the appearances to the others and was not even saved. Also, this unique appearance to someone who was not one of the original band of Christ's followers was both the first and last of its kind. Even if someone wanted to say that this is not intended to be a comprehensive list, it does not change the fact that the emphases is not on recording every appearance of the Lord, but establishing the last and final one who will be an eyewitness (and ear-witness). It need not be comprehensive, because it now states the list of all who will ever see and hear Christ till he comes again is complete.

ἔσχατον δὲ πάντων  
Last of All

ἔσχατος eschatos {es'-khat-os}

**Meaning:** 1) extreme 1a) last in time or in place 1b) last in a series of places 1c) last in a temporal succession ..

(Strong's Greek Dictionary)

ἔσχατος ἡ οὖν

(a) final(ly) 61.13 ἔσχατος, ἡ, οὖν: **pertaining to being the last in a series of objects or events - 'last, final, finally.'**

(Low & Nida)

When you combine the meaning of "Last: the final and absolute end of a series" with the "of all", it teaches us very distinctly and clearly that Paul was the very last person ever added to the list of those to whom Jesus appeared. He appeared repeatedly to the Apostles including Paul, but with the passing of the Apostles, He had delivered His full and final words. This is what we now call the "New Testament".

So if anyone claims to be an Apostle or to have seen Jesus they must be nearly 2000 years old in order to have seen Jesus before He appeared to Paul, because Paul was the last to get this special privilege of to 'see the Righteous One'.

Though God has spoken to many men in many different forms and ways in the past, He no longer 'speaks' as He once did, because He has said all He intends to say.

*Hebrews 1:1 In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.*

This verse clearly teaches:

IN THE PAST (and not anymore)

God spoke many times and in various ways through the prophets.

BUT IN THESE LAST DAYS (now he has a different plan)

He has spoken to us by his Son .

"He has spoken" - the language here has a direct and important meaning.

It does not say  
...he will speak...  
...he does speak...  
...he can speak...

It does say  
...he HAS spoken...

This is a completed action. His son spoke to us through the Apostles. This message can be repeated by men and the words when read or spoken still resound the voice of Christ. (Heb. 3:7), but he himself does not speak (God or Christ) to men or women today in new messages or audible voices, still small voices or dreams or visions.

**\*\*\*A Cautions Continuationist** would say he (God) may give dreams or visions to warn or guide his people (in application of Scriptural truths and practical matters in line with biblical principles), but he does not give any new teaching, instruction (doctrine) or changes to what he has said and is now written for our instructions (the New Testament). They would say that in the dreams or visions we might now experience, Jesus (or God) does not personally come or personally speak if such a claim is made the person may truly have had *an experience*, but it has deceived them and in turn they are deceiving others (2 Tim. 3:13)!

**The Sufficiency of Scripture** (Nothing missing, nothing more is needed)

*2 Timothy 3:16 All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.*

This means that nothing new will ever be needed to help the people of God. He, in his perfect word and indwelling Spirit has already given us everything necessary for life and godliness.

*2 Peter 1:3 His divine everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. power has given us*

When somebody says..."we need something new"... or "more" or anything else other than "more knowledge of him through the Scripture", arise and flee.

**Clear teaching and warnings that we will not see Christ till his Second Coming.**

Jesus warns us that people will be confused and deceived by "false appearances"

*Matthew 24:24 For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect-- if that were possible...*

Jesus himself will not appear, and those who appear are false Christs. Those who claim the appearances may even try to prove it with "great signs and miracles" but Jesus himself warns us beforehand.

*Matthew 24:25 Take note, I have told you beforehand. 26 So, if they say to you, 'Look! He is in the wilderness,' do not go out. If they say, 'Look! He is in the inner rooms,' **do not believe it**... (Look can also be translated 'Behold' KJV, NASV)*

*Mark 13:21-23* <sup>21</sup> And then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'Look, there he is!' do not believe it. <sup>22</sup> False christs and false prophets will arise and perform signs and wonders, to lead astray, if possible, the elect. <sup>23</sup> But be on guard; I have told you all things beforehand

Some will say he appeared to them in the wilderness or in a cave or in their own rooms or the church etc. Whatever the claim, Jesus wants us to know in advance, "do not believe it"!

Why should we not believe that he came to these people and spoke to them? Why should we not believe even a vision that we might have?

Jesus says:

*Matthew 24:27* For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

*Mark 13:24-25* <sup>24</sup> "But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, <sup>25</sup> and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. <sup>26</sup> And **then they will see the Son of Man** coming in clouds with great power and glory.

Jesus says that when He appears again, it will not be in secret or in private. It will not be witnessed by a select man or men, but the whole world will know. It will be a great and glorious appearing, remarkable and undeniable. It is 'then they will see' Him, not before.

When He comes, everyone will know, until He comes all claims are false. Only the Apostles would see and hear from him and deliver unto us the message and truths revealing the will of God for us. Now we are to pray, study and seek to live in faithful obedience to his Word, once and for all declared and still being delivered.

Additionally, God has appointed men to be messengers today (of the gospel and truth). Angels do not deliver the message of salvation, but possible a message of who to call to hear it (Acts 10) or where to go to speak it (Acts 8). These are directive, not doctrinal messages. And even these we must test lest we be led astray by false apostles and false angels (spirits).

There is a world of difference between these two. The Direct word and the written word or proclamation of what is written.

### **We hear the Written Word inspired by the Spirit.**

Today we are not to (literally) hear his voice, but the written word still speaks...(his voice figuratively) What He has spoken, still speaks...whenever read, remembered or recited.

### **The Apostles declare what they have "seen and heard" from Christ**

*Acts 4:20* for we cannot keep from speaking about what we have **seen and heard**."

*Acts 22:15* for you will be his witness to all the world of what you have **seen and heard**.

*1 John 1:3* we declare to you what we have **seen and heard** so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

They declare it not so that we will also see and hear literally, but that we may have fellowship with them, the Father and the Son.

### **What do we see...**

What He has shown to the eyes of the Apostles, we see (figuratively) with eyes of faith...

*Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.*

2 Corinthians 5:7 for we walk by faith, not by sight.

### **Apostles see and hear, we are expected to not see, but to hear (the message) and believe.**

*John 20:29 Then Jesus told him, "Because you have **seen** me, you have **believed**; blessed are those who have **not seen** and yet have **believed**."*

*1 Peter 1:8 **Although you have not seen him**, you love him; and **even though you do not see him now**, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy,*

Peter can confidently make the assertion that none of his readers have seen Christ, and should not expect to see Jesus. Those who wrongly claim to have seen Him and experienced a sense of indescribably joy, often making others feel less loved or blessed than they, are misled because without seeing we believe and 'rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy'

*Romans 10:14 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And **how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard**? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?*

We believe because we have heard and the message is delivered by someone preaching (this is not the idea of preaching in church, but the 'telling of the gospel' by all believers to others).

*1 Thessalonians 2:13 We also constantly give thanks to God for this, that when you received the word of God that you **heard** from us, you accepted it not as a human word but as what it really is, God's word, which is also at work in you **believers**.*

*Ephesians 1:13 In him you also, when you had **heard** the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had **believed** in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit;*

*1 John 5:10 Those who **believe** in the Son of God have the testimony in their **hearts**. Those who do not believe in God have made him a liar by **not believing in the testimony that God has given concerning his Son**. (Through the Apostles and repeated by all disciples.)*

### **We have the testimony (witness) in our hearts they had it both as eyewitnesses and ear witnesses and heart witnesses.**

*Titus 2:11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. 12 It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, 13 **while we wait for the blessed hope-- the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,***

Our blessed hope is the glorious appearing of Jesus. When he does come again, it will not be in dreams or visions, but grand, glorious and unmistakable.

Remember also that even John the Apostle mistakenly began worshipping an angel (since it was an angel of God it stopped him Rev. 19:9-10 and 22:8-9), so how much more easily we could be deceived by those disguised as an angel of light or false christs.

### **Heed the warnings of Christ and His Apostles:**

*2 Corinthians 11:13 For such men are **false apostles**, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. 15 It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.*

*Colossians 2:18 Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, **going on in detail about visions**,<sup>1</sup> puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind,*

May this growth in the knowledge of Him, His Word and His ways help to guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

**Both agree, Cessationists and Conservative Continuationists, that there are NO "Apostle of Jesus Christ" today but that the foundational role of the Apostles and their authoritative ministry still continues to serve the church through the New Testament.**

**If God/Jesus does not speak apart from His Word (the Bible) today and that Word is rightly deemed sufficient and complete, then how would Conservative Continuationists understand prophecy and tongues?**

**Apostolic Foundations and Prophetic Distinctions from a Cautious Continuationist perspective.** (Note to the Cessationist - all prophecy can only be defined as authoritative revelation, like Scripture and has ceased with the completion of the New Testament. What follows is another perspective. It is much more careful and considered than most continuationist positions a bears prayerful consideration)

It is important for any consideration of a Continuationist position to not cross a dangerous and highly subjective line to establish an understanding the differences in the roles of the *Apostle* and other *N. T. Prophets*.

To make this clearer we have to recognize that that Apostle are sometimes spoken of with the designation "Apostles and Prophets"

"built on the foundation of the **apostles and prophets**,  
Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone"  
Ephesians 2:20

It is not speaking about two groups 1) Apostles and 2) Prophets, but one group who are Apostle-Prophets. There is a common literary device in Greek and even English that is used to link two words such as "apostle and prophet" look at the following dictionary entry:

***hendiadys*** *hen·di·a·dys* [*hen dī ədiss*] *noun*

**figure of speech with “and”:** a literary device expressing an idea by means of two words linked by “and,” instead of by a grammatically more complex form such as an adverb qualifying an adjective. Everyday examples of hendiadys are the expressions “nice and soft,” rather than “nicely soft,” and “good and tight.”<sup>1</sup>

Other examples we might better understand would be ‘husband-father’ or in the case of Abraham and Sarai (later Sarah) ‘wife-sister’. To give just one example of more than twenty in the Greek New Testament look at the following verse.

*Acts 13:1 Now there were in the church at Antioch **prophets and teachers**, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a member of the court of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.*

In the church at Antioch there were a group of five men who were *prophets-teachers*. Each of them function in both of these capacities. **This idea is crucial because the Apostle-Prophets take on the authoritative revelatory role that was exercised by the well known O.T. prophets.** This would be, in the passages of Ephesians 2:20; 3:5 like “apostle-prophets” or ‘apostolic prophets’ or ‘prophetic apostles’. Since both ideas ‘apostle’ selected and sent by Christ, according to the will of God and ‘prophet’ one who speaks things that have been revealed to him are to be equally emphasized and not one more than the other this important literary device is used by Paul. He uses a hendiadys more than twenty times giving two terms linked by ‘and’ to describe one particular group or person. Here is a viable interpretation offered by D. Hill “*They are apostles in that they are authoritative witnesses to, indeed representatives, of Jesus, and they are prophets by virtue of the fact that they are the authentic messengers and agents of the revelation they received.*”<sup>2</sup>

*Ephesians 3:5 which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy **apostles and prophets** by the Spirit.*

*Luke 11:49 Therefore also the Wisdom of God said, 'I will send them **prophets and apostles**, some of whom they will kill and persecute,'*

There are also verses where the prophetic Apostles are distinguished from N.T. Prophets such as:

*Ephesians 4:11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers*

*1 Corinthians 12:29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles?*

*1 Corinthians 12:28 And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues.*

We are told in Eph. 4:11 that God gave the apostles, the prophets...for the equipping of the saints. We learn that the apostles in particular were foundational (Eph 2:20) and cannot exist today because of the qualifications we learned about last week. But, that does not mean that we have lost anything. God gave us Apostles and we still benefit from the same Apostles that the early church benefited from. Our churches today have our own prophets, evangelist and pastors and teachers, but we all have the same original biblical Apostles. Though Apostles are first in importance they are also first chronologically for

---

<sup>1</sup>Encarta® World English Dictionary © & (P) 1999,2000 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. Developed for Microsoft by Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.

<sup>2</sup>D. Hill, New Testament Prophecy (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1979), p. 139.



the early church. And we learn from other passages that Pastor-Teachers (Elders) hold much more importance in the early church than did prophets and evangelists. But first there were Apostles, then prophets who often were also gifted to teach (Acts 13:1) then as time passed Elders were appointed in the churches (Act 14:23; Titus 1:5) who would serve as the Pastor-Teachers, but Paul does not eliminate to role of prophets, but merely minimizes it, relegates it, and regulates it.

### **The Non-Authoritative Prophets (Is there such a thing? Conservative Continuationist say yes.)**

When talking about there being ‘prophets’ who do not speak the very words or message from God this is where paths divide between the Cessationist and Continuationist. The Continuationist will argue that we will do well to remember that even in the O.T. not all prophets spoke authoritatively on behalf of God “Thus says the Lord”, or “The word of the Lord” etc. We do certainly do see these statements throughout what we call the Major and Minor Prophets but not linked with all prophetic utterances. Beyond these there were other “prophets” in the O.T. but not of equal standing or having authoritative proclamations. We learn about the clear distinction between Moses’ prophetic gift to speak authoritatively on behalf of the Lord and a lesser gift exercised by others.

*Numbers 12:6-8 <sup>6</sup> And he said, "Hear my words: If there is a prophet among you, I the LORD make myself known to him in **a vision**; I speak with him in **a dream**. <sup>7</sup> Not so with my servant Moses. He is faithful in all my house. <sup>8</sup> With him I speak mouth to mouth, **clearly, and not in riddles**, and he beholds the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?"*

Throughout history God had appointed certain men as spokesmen such as Abraham (called a prophet in Gen. 20:7) Moses (Deut. 34:10) and the list goes on with well known prophets like Elijah, Elisha, Samuel, and so on. Yet there were others who would ‘prophesy’ and were called ‘prophets’ who did not have the same authority and calling. The content of their prophecies are not recorded and seem to be more of a spontaneous Spirit direct praise, warnings and encouragement etc. (Num. 11:25ff; 1 Sam. 10:5ff; 1 Kings 18:4). Some of these are often referred to as ‘schools of prophets’ and having leaders such as Samuel, Elijah and Elisha. Yet, we here of them prophesying, but we do not find the people taking note of the messages or even being expected to do so. Some people prophesied once, but not repeatedly (Num. 11:25) and Moses wanted all the people to prophecy in one sense of prophecy (Num. 11:29) but most certainly he did not expect all to speak to the people on behalf of God for this was a special task given to him (Num. 12:1-8) not even to Aaron ( a prophet Ex. 7:1) and Miriam (who was a prophetess (Ex. 15:20).

So, Miriam is called a prophetess by the authoritative Scriptures:

**Exodus 15:20** <sup>20</sup> Then Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women went out after her with tambourines and dancing.

But then God makes a distinction between the unique authoritative revelation he communicates to Moses (Numbers 12:6-8) and the unclear בְּחִידָת (riddles, dark sayings, enigmatic sayings in which the meaning is not clear and needs to yet be determined) that He gives to lesser "prophets" like Mariam, Aaron & others. The Word of God clearly gives the prophet Moses (followed by Joshua...) the ability to speak to the people and lead the people with the authority of God while still calling others by the term 'prophet' and 'prophetess' who God may grant an unclear enigmatic revelation that requires caution care and discernment to determine it purpose.

Thus there were even in the Old Testament distinctions between Authoritative prophets who spoke on behalf of God and other prophets to whom God would reveal things about himself and his plans through enigmatic dreams, visions and other means where the meaning is obscure. One had to be obeyed absolutely the others to be considered and even tested or evaluated.

If a prophet had true prophecies, but false teaching he was to be put to death, because it is the Lord we must walk after and fear not the word of Prophets (Deut. 13:1-5). Thus they were measured against the authoritative revelation that had already been received through authoritative peculiar prophets. If someone claimed to be a prophet and spoke "in the name of the Lord" and it did not come true he was to be put to death (Deut. 18:20-22). So we have two tests of authenticity 1) Accuracy 2) Consistency. Firstly, is the prophet's prophecy accurate, does it happen or is it true? Secondly, is it consistent with what we already know God had told us? In the O.T. days to fail these tests was supposed to be fatal. These stipulations would keep ordinary prophets from speaking "in the name of the Lord" and reduce them to saying "I had a dream" relegating their communications to a much lesser value. We see this in Numbers.

**Jeremiah 23:28** Let the prophet who has a dream tell the dream, but let him who has my word speak my word faithfully. What has straw in common with wheat? declares the LORD.

One is fodder for livestock the other a nourishing grain. When the lesser is treated like the greater people can be lead astray and supposed prophets can fabricate dreams and visions. But If they are NOT to be authoritative guidance then the danger is removed. In effect the verse says let them tell their dream, but be sure God's word is faithfully declared and that it is the Word that is the source of life sustenance and direction.

Further we should note that prophecy has two major elements 1) *forth-telling* – Speaking forth the words (praises, warnings, commands) of God. 2) *fore-telling* – Speaking about things that were soon to take place (famines, wars, etc.) or even further ahead often related to the messiah's first and even second comings. We need to distinguish between those who the Spirit would come upon and move to proclaim his excellencies and praises boldly and those who would "receive a word from the Lord" This latter group is what we most commonly think of when we speak of prophets and hence the danger of people who have a "prophetic" gift today using such unwarranted and authoritative terminology. Having seen that God has spoken in these last days through his Son (Heb. 1:1-2) and Christ appointing the Apostles (Apostle-Prophets) as His spokesmen, we should see the link between the Authoritative prophets who received directly from God in clear messages (like Moses) and others who are given dreams and visions, but unclear, enigmatic and obscure NOT having authority.

We see that an Apostle-Prophet such as Paul can claim that:

*1 Corinthians 14:36-38* <sup>36</sup> Or was it from you that the word of God came? Or are you the only ones it has reached? <sup>37</sup> ***If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that the things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord.*** <sup>38</sup> *If anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized.*

Even though the church of Corinth had prophets and he encouraged all of them to seek the exercise the gift of prophecy, he did not consider it to be the 'word of God' coming from them, even if they were prophets (vss. 36 an important distinction). He made it clear in vs. 37 that even if anyone thinks he is a prophet, he has to acknowledge that what Paul (an Apostle) was writing was a command of the Lord. This is because all prophesy and prophets of the N.T. who did not have the Apostolic distinction were not in direct communication with God or Christ, but God might give them some guidance through dreams, visions or spontaneous thoughts, possibly unclear or even in riddles. If anyone other than an Apostle

claimed to give a ‘word from the Lord’ of the messages from God came from them then they were in direct violation of this teaching. These N.T. prophecies that were to be exercised by prophets were not authoritative messages from God, but were to be tested:

*1 Corinthians 14:29-33* <sup>29</sup> *Let two or three prophets speak, and **let the others weigh what is said.*** <sup>30</sup> *If a revelation is made to another sitting there, let the first be silent.* <sup>31</sup> *For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged,* <sup>32</sup> *and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets.* <sup>33</sup> *For God is not a God of confusion but of peace. As in all the churches of the saints,*

There is a clear sense of order, and this is also not to take priority in the church only two or three should share. In verse 31 it says “you can all prophesy one by one” meaning all of the two or three will have a chance to speak, but they should wait until the one before him is finished. When an Apostle speaks or writes it is ‘a command of the Lord’ but when the normal N.T. gift of prophecy is exercised it is to be considered, and evaluated to determine its truthfulness, usefulness or relevance if any. The term ‘let the others weigh’ is a command:

**διακρινέτωσαν** verb imperative present active 3rd person plural

[Fri] **διακρίνω** (1) as evaluating the difference between things *discern, distinguish, differentiate* (MT 16.3); (2) as making a distinction between persons by evaluation *make a difference, decide between, pass judgment on* (AC 15.9); (3) as a legal technical term for arbitration *judge a dispute, settle a difference* (1C 6.5); (4) in the aorist tense, the middle sense is conveyed with the passive form; (a) as debating an issue *dispute, contend, argue* (AC 11.2)...(*Friberg Greek Lexicon*)

You may also find it interesting that the phrase “thus says the Lord” appears over 400 times, all of them in the Old Testament. There is no place where new testament prophets claim this unique prophetic ability. There are only five verses, that I could find that come even close to this idea and only three are incidents that don’t involve ‘Apostles’ (Acts 11:28; Acts 21:4; Acts 21:11)

Let us look closely at closely at the last two.

*Acts 21:4* <sup>4</sup> *And having sought out the disciples, we stayed there for seven days. And through the Spirit they were telling Paul not to go on to Jerusalem.*

*Acts 21:10-12* <sup>10</sup> *While we were staying for many days, a prophet named **Agabus** came down from Judea.* <sup>11</sup> *And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'This is how the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'"* <sup>12</sup> *When we heard this, we and the people there urged him not to go up to Jerusalem.*

We see the phrases ‘through the Spirit’ and ‘Thus says the Holy Spirit’ in these verses. We should not conclude from this that there was a ‘voice’, but just that the Holy Spirit had given some *indication or revelation* (dream, vision etc.) in which the ‘message’ seemed to reveal certain things. This passage helps us to understand N. T. prophecy better because we see the secondary nature and limitation of the gift. To understand this lets compare that prophecy of Agabus and what actually happened.

What Agabus Prophesied Acts 21:10-12	What Actually Occurred Acts 21:27-36
1) The Jews will bind Paul (vs. 11)	1) He was bound by the Roman Tribune (vs.33)
2) The Jews will deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles (vs. 11)	2) The Gentiles delivered him out of the murderous hands of the Jews. (30-32; 34)

This would not meet the requirements of one speaking the very words of God. Clearly Agabus had been shown by the Spirit, possibly in a dream or vision, Paul in the midst of Jews in Jerusalem, bound and being lead away by the Gentiles, but his explanation (Agabus' understanding the revelation) was communicated with facts and details that were not accurate (possibly because Agabus was well familiar with the hatred the Jews in Jerusalem had towards Paul). [you've seen 'possibly' repeated above because not all the details are given to us and it must be noted that danger is being revealed not directives. Also Cessationists would call the Jews the 'causative factor' and deem the prophecy accurate.]

But, this is exactly what we are talking about. God through the Spirit giving some warnings, but the clarity of detail is limited and the 'proclamation' or spoken prophecy must be contemplated, but not taken as authoritative revelation. We see further that 'through the Spirit they were telling Paul not to go to Jerusalem' and even as a result of Agabus' prophecy the people responded by urging him not to go up to Jerusalem. Now if 'through the Spirit' means that this is what God wants (accurately and authoritatively) then why did Paul respond in this way:

*Acts 21:13-15* <sup>13</sup> Then Paul answered, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be imprisoned but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." <sup>14</sup> And since he would not be persuaded, we ceased and said, "Let the will of the Lord be done." <sup>15</sup> After these days we got ready and went up to Jerusalem.

Paul would never disobey the Spirit of God (as seen in Acts 16:6) but recognized that the Spirit was giving him warnings about the danger he would face so that he would have confidence and resolve, whereas others interpreted the warnings to mean that he should not go to Jerusalem. God does not always send warnings to cause us to avoid something, but even to strengthen us for to endure it. Paul would not be persuaded and said 'Let the will of the Lord be done'. He did not consider what some said through the Spirit 'not to go...' to be the will of the Lord. This is a very important reason why prophecies must be tested. Again with the issue of authority we should note that women are permitted to 'prophecy' (Acts 21:9; 1 Cor. 11:4), but not to 'teach or exercise authority' over a man. This again leads us to recognize prophecy as non-authoritative, but possibly indicative of the Spirits leadings or warnings to be scrutinized. Thus though it is now relegated and regulated, when the Biblical principles are followed it is still useful.

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

The other mention of a prophetic activity is in:

*Acts 11:28* And one of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world (this took place in the days of Claudius).

The NIV renders the underlined portion "over the entire Roman world" even though the text does not say 'Roman', but history records that this famine was not global but regional and the NIV seeks to clarify or correct (or some translators think the phrase "ἐφ' ὅλην τὴν οἰκουμένην" could have been used generally to speak of the Roman Empire) But, it is also likely that Agabus *seeing* great famine in various cities concluded and communicated the details inaccurately.

Further what if the definition of prophecy is "authoritative direct communication from God" as the Cessationist claims then

**1 Timothy 2:12** <sup>12</sup> I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet.

The "remain quiet" is not absolute, prayer and prophecy is permitted (1 Cor. 11:5) we might even add sing. But she must not verbally be involved in any teaching or authoritative office or activity including verbal.

**Acts 21:8-9** <sup>8</sup> On the next day we departed and came to Caesarea, and we entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him. <sup>9</sup> He had four unmarried daughters, who prophesied.

Philip's daughters prophesied, but this was not *authoritative verbalizing*. The contextual sense of prophecy is immediately linked with the prophecies of Agabus. As we have seen these prophecies were helpful warnings but 'how' to respond 'what' to do, is meant or required is not given. No instruction is given. No authoritative guidance is given.

Also how can we be careful to obey both of the following:

*1 Thessalonians 5:20-21* <sup>20</sup> *Do not despise prophecies,* <sup>21</sup> *but test everything; hold fast what is good.*

We must remember the priority of Scripture and thus teaching and preaching in the churches: Centrality of teaching-preaching the Scriptures in the church (John 17:17; 1 Tim. 4:6,13; 2Tim. 2:15-17; 3:16-17; 4:2-4; Titus 2:14; 2 Thes. 2:15; Col. 2:7; Phil. 2:16; Heb. 1:1-2; Jude 1:3)

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

*1 Corinthians 14:39-40* <sup>39</sup> *So, my brothers, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues.* <sup>40</sup> *But all things should be done decently and in order*

-----End excerpt-----