

PNEUMATOLOGY (109)

As we have already demonstrated, we believe this is a clear connection to the completion of Scripture as the word “perfect” literally means complete, finished or mature (*G. Abbott-Smith*, p. 442).

Passage #3 – II Peter 1:19-21.

The Apostle Peter clearly equated the more sure prophetic word with the prophetic Scriptures (1:20). In his mind, God’s written revelation was the highest form of revelation, which also coincides with the thinking of Paul (Eph. 3:4).

Passage #4 - Revelation 22:18-19.

John warns that no prophetic revelation was to be added after the completion of the final book in the Bible—Revelation.

From these four passages we conclude that **the gift of prophecy was in the process of ceasing as the Word of God was being written. After the book of Revelation was completed, the gift was completely done away just as Paul predicted. The gift passed off the scene just as the apostles did.**

The gift of prophecy was a **foundational** gift needed to reveal God’s Word and will **prior** to His written revelation. God’s Word and God’s will are fully revealed in God’s Word. His program, His plan and His will are completely revealed and contained in the 66 books He put in writing—the Bible.

(Question #6) - How was the gift of prophecy viewed by the early church?

When the gift of prophecy was fully operative during the days of the early church, it was a gift that tended to be despised (I Thess. 5:20). The word “despise” means that the gift was treated with contempt and was considered as nothing.

The gift did reveal direct messages from God, but either due to the fact that people did not want direct messages or due to the fact that the gift was not flashy or showy like tongues, it was viewed as nothing. Keep in mind this was the number two ranked gift, but it was a despised gift.

Clearly setting forth the truth of God has never been a popular type of ministry. If one does flashy things, he will impress people, but one who simply communicates the revelation of God will, more than likely, be despised.

(Question #7) - Is a preacher or teacher of God’s Word a prophet?

This is a particularly confusing issue today. Some draw two categories of prophets—1) a revelatory prophet; 2) a proclamatory prophet. It is this teacher’s contention that there are **no** prophets today.

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Powerful proclamation of God's Word **is not** the same as prophetic revelation from God. In every instance in the Bible, a prophet received direct revelation from God and no pastor, teacher or evangelist receives direct revelation from God. A preacher proclaims God's written Word. A teacher teaches God's written Word. A prophet received God's inspired revelation. Preachers and teachers interpret and proclaim what God has already put into writing. A prophet received direct revelation from God.

The only prophets who exist today are false prophets. John said, "many false prophets have gone out into the world" (I John 4:1; Jer. 23:16, 25-40). The gift of prophecy was a foundational gift and has long passed off the scene. Those who claim they get direct messages from God today are false.

Gift #3 - The gift of an evangelist .

The English word "evangelist" comes from the Greek word "euaggelistas" which actually means one who proclaims or preaches good news or glad news (*G. Abbott-Smith*, p. 184). As we relate this word to the "gift," we would say that **an evangelist is one who is supernaturally gifted by God with an ability to proclaim the good news of the grace message of salvation in a variety of situations and settings, and is so uniquely fitted for this that people respond and are converted.**

In the Bible, there are three specific references to this gift:

1) Acts 21:8 - Philip is identified as "the evangelist."

It is interesting that this Philip was first identified as a faithful man of God by the congregation and appointed as "deacon" (Acts 6:5). At this point, there is no hint that his gift had even surfaced, even though he was faithful and in an appointed office. After severe persecution broke out, believers were scattered and Philip went to the city of Samaria and great crowds listened to him and came to faith (Acts 8:4-13). After this, Peter and John came to Samaria to complete the work he began and Philip was directed by God to go to Gaza (Acts 8:26) and on the way he met a court official of the Queen of Ethiopia (Candace) and he preached to him and he was saved (Acts 8:27-39). After this, Philip kept preaching the Gospel until he came to Caesarea (Acts 8:40). We lose sight of Philip for the next 15-19 years until we come to Acts 21:8. After this we do not know what happened to him—some say he was martyred, others say he lived out his days in Caesarea. Philip was a man who truly had the gift of evangelism.

2) Ephesians 4:11 - A specific gift is said to be given by God for equipping saints and for building the body of Christ.

3) II Timothy 4:5 - A minister is specifically charged to "do the work of an evangelist."

In this case, there is no evidence that Timothy had the gift of evangelist, but as a minister he was to do the work of one, which would mean he was to proclaim and herald the good news of the grace Gospel of God.

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In thinking of evangelism as a supernatural gift of God, we would make the following observations:

Observation #1 - One with the gift of evangelism will have a supernatural burden for the lost, which includes a tremendous desire to see them saved.

Observation #2 - One with the gift of evangelism will proclaim the good news of the Gospel to those who are lost. As in the case of Philip, this may include proclamation to the masses or one-on-one situations. An evangelist will preach.

Observation #3 - One with the gift of evangelism will have a supernatural ability to clearly and accurately set forth the Gospel.

The true Gospel of God is very complex. There are matters pertaining to sin, the substitutionary work of Christ, faith, forgiveness, reconciliation, just to name a few. It is very obvious that Philip had a true grasp of many of these doctrines as he unfolded for the eunuch in Isaiah 53 (Acts 8:32-35). An evangelist, truly gifted by God, will be supernaturally skilled in being able to unravel the true Gospel in a clear and accurate manner that impacts unbelievers. There will be no minimizing of sound doctrine.

Observation #4 - One with the gift of evangelism will see unusual responses to his Gospel presentation.

In other words, those who truly have a gift of evangelism will see people remarkably saved. More than likely, one with this gift will see large numbers of people saved and also one-on-one results. One with this gift, like Philip, does see people come to true faith in Christ, which is clear evidence that he has this gift.

Observation #5 - One with the gift of evangelism recognizes how this gift relates to other believers.

One with this gift will use it in two ways connected to the church—1) Obviously to help build the church as people get saved and get into the church and 2) To help equip others to do evangelistic work (Eph. 4:11-12). Whenever I hear someone who professes to be an evangelist brow-beating people in the church to be the same way he is, I question the gift. A true gift of evangelism is continually involved in reaching out to the lost, not brow-beating the saved. Many times, those who claim to be evangelists appear to me to be frustrated with their own lack of outreach to the lost so they project their frustrations on congregations, which is not the mark of the true gift of evangelism. One truly gifted will certainly help equip others, but is supernaturally gifted himself to reach the lost. Also we may notice that as soon as Peter and John came to Samaria, Philip did not stay there to try and function as a teacher; he moved on, utilizing his gift of evangelist. Many churches are in a miserable state because an evangelist is trying to function as a pastor/teacher when in fact he does not have this gift.

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He is miserable and the people are miserable even though both love the Lord. It seems to me that one with a true gift recognizes his supernatural gift and has a passion to use it.

Observation #6 - One with the gift of evangelism will have a great joy in seeing others come to Christ.

Notice we read, concerning Philip, that when one came to Christ he “went on his way rejoicing” (Acts 8:39). An evangelist has no greater happiness than seeing people come to Christ. One with the true gift of evangelism will find these things to be true.

Gift #4 - The gift of pastor/teacher .

Pastor/teacher is one gift, not two. This conclusion comes from Ephesians 4:11. In this verse, before each noun—apostles, prophets and evangelists—there is an article “the,” meaning it is referring to a specific gift. When we come to the nouns “pastor” and “teacher,” there is one article “the” before the first noun “pastor,” but none before the second noun “teacher.” Pastor and teacher are simply joined together by the coordinating conjunction “and.” Literally the Greek reads “and he gave the pastors and teachers.” There is a grammatical rule in Greek called the Granville Sharp rule, which says when you have one article connected to two nouns of the same case, connected by the copulative conjunction “and,” the last noun “always relates to the same person that is expressed or described by the first noun or participle” (*Dana & Mantey*, p. 147). (Another good illustration of this is II Peter 2:20—“the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” Jesus Christ is both the Lord and Savior as demonstrated by one article “the” connected to two nouns.) Having discussed this, we conclude that pastor/teacher is one gift, not two.

The word “pastor” is the Greek word for shepherd . It specifically implies acting as a shepherd by tending a flock (*G. Abbott-Smith*, p. 370). The pastor aspect implies caring for the flock, guiding and guarding the flock and leading the flock. It implies having oversight of the flock God has entrusted to him.

The word “teacher” is the Greek word from which we get our English word “didactic.” The word refers to an ability to teach and give instruction concerning the Word of God and the doctrines of God (*Ibid.*, p. 113). Dr. Ryrie defined this as “the God given ability to explain the harmony and the detail of God’s revelation” (Charles Ryrie, *The Holy Spirit*, p. 90).

It is very important to see that this is one gift. One who truly has a God-given gift of pastor/teacher will not only have a supernatural ability to oversee a flock, but to instruct the flock. Dr. Paul Enns makes a very important observation when he states: **“It is sometimes said of a church pastor: ‘He can’t teach very well but he is a fine pastor.’ That, of course, is impossible. If a person has this gift he is both a shepherd and a teacher. As a teacher, the emphasis is on the method by which the shepherd does his work. He guides, guards, he protects by teaching. This is an important emphasis for the maturation of believers in a local church. Paul strongly exhorted Timothy to faithfulness in teaching the Word (I Tim. 1:3, 5; 4:11; 6:2, 17)”** (Paul Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*, pp. 274-275).