

## STUDY 10

# The Gift of the Spirit and Pastors

*James Krieg*

Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Gather for me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them, and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you. <sup>17</sup> And I will come down and talk with you there. And I will take some of the Spirit that is on you and put it on them, and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, so that you may not bear it yourself alone . . . ’

<sup>24</sup> So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD. And he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people and placed them around the tent. <sup>25</sup> Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. And as soon as the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied. But they did not continue doing it.

<sup>26</sup> Now two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, and the Spirit rested on them. They were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp. <sup>27</sup> And a young man ran and told Moses, ‘Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.’ <sup>28</sup> And Joshua the son of Nun, the assistant of Moses from his youth, said, ‘My lord Moses, stop them.’ <sup>29</sup> But Moses said to him, ‘Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD’s people were prophets, that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!’ (Num. 11:16–17, 24–29).<sup>1</sup>

The Father’s goal from the beginning has been to create a community of Spirit-filled children, led by Spirit-filled men and women. In the above passage Moses catches a glimpse of this goal. The purpose of the Spirit’s work in this situation was that Moses’ burden of feeding and leading the people might be shared (see 11:9–15); it was the Lord’s answer to Moses’ complaints about the people’s complaints about the manna which in their eyes didn’t compare to the gourmet food of Egypt. In the Lord’s lavish grace, He is willing to provide meat for His people, even though the manna was adequate; and in His holy love He also sends disciplining judgement in conjunction with the gift, so that Israel may ultimately understand that their covenant relationship with Yahweh is not one where He simply panders to their every whim. The seventy elders are set apart and enabled by the Spirit for their role,<sup>2</sup> and unexpectedly demonstrate their appointment by prophesying—which begs the question: why do you need to prophesy in order to give people meat?

---

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise stated, all Scripture quotations in this study are from the English Standard Version.

<sup>2</sup> We possibly see this echoed in the appointment of the seven Spirit-filled men to distribute food to the widows in Acts 6:1–6.

## *The Gift of the Spirit and Pastors*

As the story unfolds, we see that their role was not necessarily distribution of food, but to in some way stand with Moses ‘around the tent’ (v. 24) in the judgement that followed:

And the people rose all that day and all night and all the next day, and gathered the quail. Those who gathered least gathered ten homers. And they spread them out for themselves all around the camp. <sup>33</sup> While the meat was yet between their teeth, before it was consumed, the anger of the LORD was kindled against the people, and the LORD struck down the people with a very great plague (Num. 11:32–33).

The empowerment of the Spirit was required for these men to minister to the whole nation of Israel in the midst of the Lord’s gracious action of judgement. Presumably they are the same body of men who accompanied Moses at the giving of the Law and the sprinkling of the blood of the covenant on the people (Exod. 24:1–12), who ‘beheld God, and ate and drank’ (v. 11), and thus were qualified not to guard the tent against the people, but to facilitate the people’s access to the forgiveness that would be provided through the numerous sacrifices that would be offered in the wake of the plague. The contaminated quail was in hindsight seen to be the gracious action for the Shepherd leading and disciplining His sheep in covenant faithfulness:

He spread a cloud for a covering,  
and fire to give light by night.  
<sup>40</sup> They asked, and he brought quail,  
and gave them bread from heaven in abundance.  
<sup>41</sup> He opened the rock, and water gushed out;  
it flowed through the desert like a river.  
<sup>42</sup> For he remembered his holy promise,  
and Abraham, his servant (Ps. 105:39–41).

Moses’ response to Joshua’s objection to Eldad and Medad’s prophesying, ‘Would that all the LORD’s people were prophets, that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!’ (v. 29) was an anticipation of Pentecost, and his sentiments are echoed in the words of the prophets, notably Joel’s famous prophecy:

And it shall come to pass afterward,  
that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh;  
your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,  
your old men shall dream dreams,  
and your young men shall see visions (Joel 2:28).

This gift of the Spirit was not only that all may know the Lord (Jer. 31:34), but that Israel might fulfill their mandate as God’s chosen people, entrusted with the oracles of God (Rom. 3:2), to be a blessing to all nations through proclaiming the excellencies of God to His glory (1 Pet. 2:9). The Spirit sanctified the seventy elders for their roles, foreshadowing the sanctification of the whole nation/people; sanctified not to form a holy club or esoteric society, but to participate in the action of the triune God in reconciling the world to Himself.

The outpouring of the Spirit in Acts is invariably linked with speaking the Word of God, be it in tongues, prophecy or proclamation. We see the church, as the true people of God—those who are truly Israel because they are so through faith not the flesh —

## *The Gift of the Spirit and Pastors*

fulfilling this mandate through the proclamation of the Gospel and the dynamic action of the Word of God in the community of the Father's family; the former being the overflow of the latter. This was no doubt in Paul's mind as he wrote his letter to the Ephesians. The church finds her completeness and full identity not in her structures, strategies or slogans, but in her unity in Christ her head and husband who fills all things and so gives wholeness and maturity to His bride. Every member (Eph. 4:7, ἐνὶ δὲ ἐκλόστῳ ἡμῶν) is given this fullness, which enables them to operate as members of the Body; this leads one to see that the list of 4:11 need not apply to a distinct group of 'staff', but is in a sense descriptive of the ministry of the whole body:

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers,<sup>12</sup> to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,<sup>13</sup> until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ . . . (Eph. 4:11–13).

To show the basis for these gifts, Paul quotes in verse 8 from Psalm 68, a song of Yahweh's victory over His enemies, demonstrated in the deliverance of His people from Egypt, their establishment in the land of promise, and of the Temple in Jerusalem, 'Because of your temple at Jerusalem kings shall bear gifts to you' (v. 29). In the Psalm it is men who give gifts to the victorious, exalted King as he processes into the temple (v. 24); Paul has Christ the King *giving* gifts *to* men. Some have attempted to explain what at first appears to be a misquotation here in various ways, which impose modern grammar and punctuation on the text. Whatever may have been in Paul's mind, it seems that he quotes the passage as prolepsis;<sup>3</sup> the kings of Psalm 68 give gifts in tribute to the One whom they recognise as being King of all kingdoms and Lord of all nations, and they do so in anticipation of the protection and wealth that will come to their kingdoms as a result of being embraced by their Sovereign and subsumed into His empire. The Lord is not made richer by the receiving of gifts from men, since all things already belong to Him; rather the acknowledgement of His sovereign rule over the world means riches for the nations whom He has promised to bless. In a sense the giving and receiving are of the same action; the action of the King.

Jesus, by virtue of His cross, resurrection and reign, has been given by the Father the kingdom of this world (Rev. 11:15), and will reign with the Father over the new Jerusalem into which 'the kings of the earth will bring their glory' (Rev. 21:24). This means that 'receiving gifts among men' in Psalm 68 necessarily implies the application of 'he gave gifts to men' in Ephesians 4:8 when we see that Psalm 68 has been fulfilled in Christ. This is more than trivial exegetical semantics. Knowing this must necessarily enlarge our understanding of the gifts of verse 11. His goal to 'fill all things' (v. 10) speaks not so much of his immanence or omnipresence ('My God is so **BIG!**'), but of His sovereign rule as head of all things for the church. It is the reigning Christ, who from his throne at the right hand of the Father, far above all rule and authority, administers his church through the appointment of these offices, and as the Gospel goes out to the nations through the ministry of the Body of Christ.

---

<sup>3</sup> That is, in anticipation of its implications.

## *The Gift of the Spirit and Pastors*

The scope of this paper allows only a limited examination of each of the offices of verse 11; and our goal in this is to see specifically the place of the pastor/teacher<sup>4</sup> in relationship to apostle, prophet and evangelist. The survey is not comprehensive, and will focus chiefly on the Gospels and Acts.

### **Apostles (ἀπόστολος, *apostolos*)**

These men were separated from the wider circle of disciples and commissioned by Christ, therefore reflecting his ministry. All four Gospels show the appointment of the Twelve, and the giving to them of apostolic authority, involving proclaiming the kingdom of God, and authority to go out in his name and exercising authority over unclean spirits and to heal. Yet this was not restricted to the Twelve, as we see Jesus in Luke 10:1–12 sending out another 72 with the same commission; quite possibly this is an indication that this was something he did more than twice. This appointment was not by their choice or will: ‘You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide’ (John 15:16).<sup>5</sup> The distinct impression one gets is that the apostolic ministry is not one that is limited to time or number; Jesus’ boundaries of definition were much wider than the ones we might want to set, as the Twelve had to learn when later they realised the necessity of including Paul (and with him Silas, Apollos, Timothy, et al.) in their number.

### **Prophets (προφήτης, *prophētēs*)**

In the Gospels the title of prophet is only used in reference to the Old Testament prophets, to John the Baptist who stands in their line, and Jesus himself when people surmise that he may be ‘The Prophet who is to come’ (John 6:14). In this we see Jesus himself as the ‘final word’—the Word made flesh, who in his arrival makes obsolete any notion of ‘ongoing revelation’. The role of the prophets in pointing God’s people forward to the Day of the Lord has given way to the declaration in the Gospel that this Day has arrived. Yet this declaration in itself is also prophetic: ‘the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy’ (Rev. 19:10). The Old Testament prophets, ‘searched and inquired carefully’ to see that which has ‘now been announced’ to—and subsequently by—us (1 Pet. 1:10–12). So we might dare to claim that proclamation of the Gospel is more fully true prophecy than anything spoken by the Old Testament prophets. In Acts ‘prophets’ are mentioned four times, at some strategic moments in the advance of this Gospel—predicting the coming famine (11:27–30), the commissioning of Paul and Barnabas (13:1–3), the Jerusalem letter to Gentiles (15:32), and the prediction of Paul’s arrest (21:10–11).

### **Evangelists (εὐαγγελιστής, *euangelistēs*)**

Phillip (one of the seven charged with the role of distributing food to widows) is the only person in the New Testament who is entitled ‘evangelist’ (Acts 21:8), and Timothy is urged to see that to fulfill his varied ministry at Ephesus was to ‘do the work of an evangelist’ (2 Tim. 4:5). Simply meaning ‘a proclaimer of the Gospel’,

---

<sup>4</sup> The debate may continue endlessly and uselessly about whether pastor and teacher are distinct offices or a single office of pastor–teacher; any pastor must also teach, and any teacher must be pastoral. See study 15 for more clarification on this question.

<sup>5</sup> Which helps us see that this verse is not so much about assurance of salvation and election, but about our confidence in the ministry of the New Covenant.

## *The Gift of the Spirit and Pastors*

these two uses of εὐαγγελιστής (*euangelistēs*) would demonstrate that this proclamation characterises and goes hand in hand with all ministry, no matter how ‘mundane’. Our brothers and sisters in the majority world have been more conscious of this role as an office in the church that deserves the training, commissioning and sending of dedicated men, however, as the West is becoming increasingly post-Christian, more Western churches and movements are seeing the urgent need for this gift to be recognised.

### **Pastor–Teachers (ποιμήν, *poimēn*; διδάσκαλος, *didaskalos*)**

In the flow of this apostolic, prophetic and proclamatory ministry of God through His people, we come finally to the pastor–teachers (shepherd–teachers).<sup>6</sup> As with the first three, we should be careful to place hard boundaries around the role, since it is defined by the sovereign work of the Spirit who manifests himself (1 Cor. 12:7) in various ways in the church. Their place in the list could be seen as an indication of chronology; the pastor–teacher builds on the foundation laid by the ministry of the first three; the former may come and go, the latter remains more constant as the church continues her journey towards maturity in the stature of the fullness of Christ (Eph. 4:13).

Yet this constancy neither makes the office more superior to nor replaces apostles and prophets. Historically a lot of passionate rhetoric has surrounded debates and discussions on whether the offices of apostle and prophet have continued beyond the first century (i.e. the death of the original apostles and the completion of the New Testament canon). Both cessationist and continuist have been guilty of bad exegesis, arguments from silence, and ad hominem attacks. Both ironically have appealed to what seems to many to be the actual cessation of apostolic and prophetic activity and other miraculous gifts in the Western church; one saying that it is in the providence and plan of God, the other that it is cause for us to rediscover them.

Whether we are cessationist or continuist, we must nevertheless all agree on several things about all of the gifts:

Firstly: These people are appointed by Christ for his church (‘he gave’), not by the church for Christ. Possibly our problems begin when we want to define, restrict, quantify and professionalise the offices in our attempt to domesticate and rule over the church. From time to time para-church movements may arise that seek to ‘redress the imbalance’ of the perceived absence of one or more offices, and often consequently battle with defining their relationship to (or independence from) the local congregations in which the deficiency is perceived. We may also use them to set up a clergy–laity distinction, demanding that each office requires certain training and worldly qualifications. As we have seen in the brief survey above, none of the offices appear to be mutually exclusive, and all elude a neat and tidy categorisation or ‘job description’; they are ultimately the manifestation of the Spirit himself who blows where he wills (John 3:8).

Secondly: Jesus is building his church, ‘on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone’ (Eph. 2:20), and so the church,

---

<sup>6</sup> Here in Ephesians is the sole place in the New Testament where the title ποιμήν is applied to someone other than Jesus, except in the literal sense. The elders in Ephesus (Acts 20:28) and the Dispersion (1 Pet. 5:2–3) are charged with pastoral responsibility, and in both cases reminded that the flock/church is God’s (i.e. not theirs). Does this indicate that eldership and shepherding are synonymous, or that those with authority need to be always reminded that true authority is embodied in the self-sacrifice emulated by the Good Shepherd?

## *The Gift of the Spirit and Pastors*

as the household of God, is necessarily apostolic and prophetic; a calling known only as we operate corporately. This means that in the course of its apostolic and prophetic ministry there will be (and have been) persons who will be used in significant ways that we may call apostolic or prophetic, even if we are shy to directly label them apostles or prophets. At the same time, the ministry of individual persons loses validity as soon as they operate as individuals, independent of the Body; once they lose sight of the fact that their being gifted to the church is cause for great humility in which there is place neither for celebrity status nor personal empire building.<sup>7</sup>

A number of passages, notably in Paul's letters, speak specifically of the apostolic ministry in a way that does not immediately allow a direct application of what is said to every Christian—for example, when Paul says in 1 Corinthians 4:13, 'We have become, and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things', this is in the context of drawing a contrast between Paul (and his apostolic companions), and the believers in the churches to whom and for whom they laboured: 'We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute' (1 Cor. 4:10).<sup>8</sup> These things cannot be said to be ipso facto the case for the 'everyday' Christian—*unless we understand that this person is a member of the apostolic and prophetic community, and as such both suffers and rejoices with the Body*. The rejection and hatred a Christian may face is not a personal thing; it is a rejection of Christ as he is embodied in his church. As a pastor-teacher, I must see myself as being in this flow of the apostolic and prophetic work of Christ in his church, and rest firmly on this as my foundation.

Thirdly: The goal of these gifts is the maturing of the church into 'the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ'. This is not an end in itself, but is with a view to him filling all things; the church's glory is the glory of the Father's grace (Eph. 1:6, 12, 14), and the fullness of this will be seen in the *Telos*, not in the visible institutions we are wont to call 'churches'. So while we serve the church, we ultimately serve Christ and through him the Father. This means we cannot see this passage as a strategy for church growth or management just waiting to be applied, nor is there any room for self-congratulation when we feel we have got our ministry structures 'right'. Both pastoral care and teaching is therefore transformed from management and therapy into an exciting (even exhilarating) participation in the Father's eschatological purpose. Our task is not to help people live happy, comfortable and prosperous lives in this world, but to call them to fix their eyes on Jesus, and forsake all this world has to offer in light of their treasure stored in Heaven.

Fourthly: The gifts are an expression not just of the ministry of Jesus in his church, but reveal something that is ontological about humanity. As the renewed, recreated humanity, constituted in Christ the second Adam, the church as a community should be expected to display the creational design; the various ministries and gifts within the church are not purely pragmatic means to get the church to function well or to achieve

---

<sup>7</sup> For this reason, it is good to be presenting this paper at 'New Creation Teaching Ministry', not 'Geoffrey Bingham Ministries'.

<sup>8</sup> Some commentators see Paul being sarcastic here—speaking not of realities but of the Corinthians' self-perception. Rather, Paul is highlighting the fact that the Corinthians were being misled by the 'Super Apostles' who proclaimed worldly success and prosperity as a sign of God's blessing and in this they were no longer one with Paul in the true ministry of the Gospel. His call in verse 16 to 'be imitators of me' is a call back to being the authentic Apostolic community.

## *The Gift of the Spirit and Pastors*

her KPI's.<sup>9</sup> The gifts are representative of the Spirit-filled people of God, created and redeemed to be vessels of God's glory; exercising authority over creation; hearing and speaking forth the Word of God; living in genuine, self-sacrificial love and care. They show a humanity that is functional and complementary; in short: *it works*, and in working, all glory goes to the Father who created all things to be very good and work together (Gen. 1:31). It is an interesting aside to note that some secular analysts who study the functioning of successful teams have identified five key roles that they say should exist in any organisation in order for it to operate smoothly and with growth. Each of these roles can be seen to correspond in some way to the five gifts of Ephesians 4:11, suggesting further their ontological nature.

This means that pastoral-teaching ministry is also firmly grounded in the realities of the created world; it is not a call to escape the material and focus only on the 'spiritual'. We teach people of the excellencies of the glory of Christ, including his faithfulness to redeem the whole of this groaning creation and the final liberation of the physical world into the freedom of the glory of the children of God (Rom. 8:21).

Fifthly: Ultimately, we will all be cessationist. All five titles of Ephesians 4:11 are attributed, finally, to Christ. He is the **Apostle** and high priest of our confession (Heb. 3:1); the **Prophet** like Moses raised up by God (John 7:40; Acts 3:22); the **Evangelist** who came 'proclaiming the gospel of God (Mark 1:14-15); the Good **Shepherd/Pastor** who lays down his life for the sheep (John 10:11); and the **Teacher** who by his Spirit leads us into the truth of all that the Father has and is (John 16:12-15). When Jesus our Apostle/Prophet/Evangelist/Pastor/Teacher appears, then in a sense all of these titles—insofar as they are applied in this age—will become obsolete. They would have fulfilled their purpose in this age when the kingdom of God is advancing by force (Matt. 11:12) and when the doors of the kingdom remain open to those who will enter by faith through the Gospel proclaimed by the church apostolic. We can therefore say with Paul, 'Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart' (2 Cor. 4:1).

---

<sup>9</sup> Key Performance Indicators.