

IN ACTS: MULTIPLE/VARIED GOD GIVEN REVELATIONS: NORMATIVE?

In our previous lesson, we reviewed key aspects of the transitional nature of the Book of Acts. As noted, a major shift was occurring in God’s dealings with mankind: from the communication-medium of one nation (Israel), God was shifting to the communication-medium of one body (the Church); from one ethnic people (Jews) to a universal-regenerated-people whose ethnic heritage was inconsequential; from a specialized, restricted priesthood (Levites) to a universal priesthood of all believers. A new dispensation was at hand: the Church Age.

Acts records the transition to this new age. And as in every dispensational transition, there was a very intensive manifestation of God given revelation. In this case, the revelations came through spiritual gifts, signs, wonders, visions, angelic missions, dreams and Christophanies. See the documentation below.

Acts Records Intensive, Proliferated, God-given Revelation Via Various Means

REVELATORY MEANS	ACTS 1-12 (ca. 30-44 AD)	ACTS 13-20 (ca. 45-62 AD)
<i>Tongues (Foreign Languages)</i>	2:1-11 Pentecost 10:44-46 house of Cornelius	19:6,7 disciples of John the Baptist
<i>Signs, Wonders, Healings</i>	2:43 _____ thru the 12 3:7-9 _____ at the Temple 5:12-16 many thru the _____ 8:6,7 many via Philip (Samaria)	13:8-10 lame Man at Lystra 19:11,12 many via Paul at Ephesus
<i>Angelic Intercession</i>	5:18,19 _____ Apostles in prison 12:7-10 frees _____ in prison	27:23,24 assures Paul
<i>Visions</i>	2:17 prophecy of visions 9:10-13 to Ananias about Paul 10:3-6 to Cornelius 10:10-17 to Peter 10:19 to Peter (11:5) 12:7 to Peter (Prison)	16:9,10 Macedonian Vision to Paul 18:9,10 encouragement to Paul at Corinth
<i>Christophany</i>	9:1-6 to Paul (in 26:19 Paul calls this “the heavenly vision”)	
<i>Prophecies</i>	11:28 Agabus: famine in Jerusalem	19:6 followers of John the Baptist 27:24,25 Paul to shipmates

Observe:

1. Signs, wonders, visions, and healings that are predominant in Acts 1-12 occur less and less frequently as the rest of the book unfolds. God intended them to be temporary.
2. That these gifts were temporary reaffirms the transitional nature of Acts.
3. Leaders/believers suffered and died; not everyone experienced miraculous deliverance: many die as per Stephen (Chapter 7), believers via Saul (8:1-3), even James (12:2).

(OVER)

The Temporality of Some Spiritual Gifts

Definition: A spiritual gift is a gift given by the grace of the Holy Spirit for the purpose of service or ministry of spiritual things during the Church Age (Eph. 4:7,8,11-16). Every believer has at least one gift (I Pet. 4:10; Eph. 4:7,8; I Cor. 12:7,11,18). There are 20 such gifts recorded in I Cor. 12:8-12,28; Rom. 12:3-8; and Eph. 4: 8-11: ten were temporary, ten are permanent. (See my printout entitled “Definitions of 20 Spiritual Gifts Recorded in Scripture”). The spiritual gifts named in the New Testament can be classified and categorized as follows:

<p style="text-align: center;">GIFTS PROVIDING SUPPLEMENTARY REVELATION</p> <p style="text-align: center;">*****</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>PROPHECY</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>WORD OF WISDOM</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>WORD OF KNOWLEDGE</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>TONGUES</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES</i></p> <p>These gifts supplied needed information before the Word of God was complete; i.e., oral subordinate revelation until the written revelation was complete.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">GIFTS PROVIDING CONFIRMING TESTIMONY</p> <p style="text-align: center;">*****</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>PROPHECY</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>TONGUES</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>MIRACLES</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>HEALINGS</i></p> <p>These gifts authenticated the oral information as Divine before the Word of God was complete: note the word “confirmed” in Mark:16:20; Heb. 2:3.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">GIFTS PROVIDING CHURCH LEADERSHIP (PUBLIC)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">*****</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>APOSTLES (RESTRICTED)</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>PROPHETS</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>EVANGELISTS</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>PASTOR-TEACHERS</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>TEACHERS</i></p> <p>These gifts care for local church</p> <p>_____.</p> <p>Apostles and prophets were foundational. They are gone. Eph. 2:20; 4:11,12.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">GIFTS PROVIDING VARIED MINISTRIES IN THE LOCAL CHURCH</p> <p style="text-align: center;">*****</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>MINISTRY</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>HELPS</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>GOVERNMENTS</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>RULING</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>EXHORTATION</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>GIVING</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>FAITH</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>DISCERNING OF SPIRITS</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>MERCY</i></p> <p>These gifts care for local church</p> <p>_____.</p>
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Proof That Some Gifts Ceased

1. The gift of Apostleship, unique to the 12 plus Paul, along with the gift of prophecy were foundational to the church and ended in the first century, Eph. 2:20.
2. The extra-revelatory gifts of knowledge, prophecy, and tongues are said to be temporary in I Cor. 3:18.
3. These (#2) were to cease when the New Testament (the final revelation of God) was completed, I Cor. 13:9-10.
4. I Cor. 13:8 actually states that prophecy and knowledge would be “done away with” (passive voice, meaning God would do it), and that tongues would cease of themselves (middle voice, meaning no more generations would receive this gift). When the generation died, the gift died with it.
5. Hebrews 2:3,4, written before 70 AD, indicates that many of the gifts of the Holy Spirit had already ceased.
6. As we would expect, history confirms that after the first century, tongues and the miracle gifts are referred to by writers as phenomena unique to apostolic times.

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