#3 PROPHECY & DISCERNING OF SPIRITS

The Spirit has been active since creation (Gen 1:2- hovering over the waters), empowering leaders and prophets throughout Israel's history. The outpouring at Pentecost (Acts 2) was the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy (Joel 2:28-29) and Jesus' promise. The Spirit now lives not just with God's people but in them and through them. The entire New Testament era is the "age of the Spirit", and the gifts are part of how God equips and sustains and empowers His Church until Jesus returns. When the church gathers the Spirit is present and active! We should come expecting that!

Unlocked-Releasing what God has already given!

1 Corinthians 12:9-10
Intro-Jesus is at the Center of the Gifts!
-->PURSUE JESUS-DESIRE THE GIFTS

Prophecy
*The Greek Word Prof-ay-tay-ah (Propheteia)

***The Human report of a divine revelation**

-Foretelling & Forth telling (Proclamation)

*A message inspired by the Spirit and given in a present situation

*The source of all true prophecy is God not man.

How does God reveal/bring about Prophecy?
-Audible Voice
- Visions/Dreams
- Words, Thoughts, Mental Pictures

*That's weird/bizarre some would say…
-Take a look at the Bible and see how God does some incredibly bizarre and unconventional things!!
-Jeremiah 13:1-11 Go buy a pair of underwear, don't wash them at all, then go bury them. A while later he's told to go dig it up and put it on, but Jeremiah says no way, it's useless…
-Ezekiel…started his prophetic career by eating a scroll God had given to him. (ch 2&3)
*he spent 430 days lying on his side symbolizing the number of years Israel lived in sin.
*Refused to mourn his wife's death
-Isaiah was told to go around Jerusalem for 3 years preaching naked/or in his underwear…
-NT Agabus comes to Paul and strips off his belt and ties himself up and said this is you Paul!

—>Similarities b/n OT & NT Prophets
*both are called Prophets
*both receive revelation from God
*use phrases like "The Lord said", "God said" "The Spirit said"

—>Differences b/n OT Prophets & NT Prophets
1 Different Audiences:

OT speaking to apostate nation who had turned from God
NT speaking to the body of Christ.

OT Prophets were "lone rangers" came and went on their own
NT Prophets part of body of Christ, accountable w/in the body like everyone else

OT Prophets bringing THE WORD of the Lord, with a death penalty for being wrong
NT Prophets at best are bringing A WORD from the Lord but it's not scripture

OT people were bound by the word of the Prophet
NT people are bound by the Word of God and called to test or weigh the prophecy out against scripture.

OT were a few prophets
NT many and possibly anyone can prophesy...
see 1Cor 14 which I will unpack in a couple of weeks.

—>You are NOT bound by the words of a prophet or by a prophecy!!!
*Accountable to Lordship of Jesus Christ & To His Word
*Test the Prophecy
*1Thessalonians 5:19-21 "Do not quench the Spirit. Do not treat prophecies with contempt but test them all; hold on to what is good…"
The Primary Tests Are:
Does it align with Scripture?
-the Spirit never contradicts His own Word

Does it exalt Jesus?
-the Spirit's primary work is to glorify Christ (Jn 16:14)
Does it produce the Fruit of the Spirit?
-love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control are the marks of Spirit-activity.

*Fruit of the Spirit is not the same as Gifts of the Spirit!
Does it strengthen, encourage, or comfort?
-1 Cor 14:3 But the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging, and comfort.
Does it come to pass?
-if it is foretelling or futuristic

1 Timothy 4:14
Prophecy spoke to the gift that was being given to Timothy in that moment...
Notice also the gift was given through the laying on of hands!!

Matthew 16:16-19
-Is there an aspect of both Forthtelling and Foretelling over Peter?

-->Discerning/Distinguishing of Spirits

*Satan masquerades as an Angel of Light...
This is why this gift is so important!!!

***This is the POLICEMAN OF THE GROUP!!**
*The ability to distinguish/identify the words/works of the

-Holy Spirit
-Human Spirit
-Hellish Spirit (demonic)

-1John 4:1 says all believers are to test the Spirits to see whether they are from God.

-This is supernatural gift given to help aid the body of Christ!!

While everyday Christian discernment is a practical, learned skill for making wise choices, the discerning of spirits is a specific, supernatural gift of the Holy Spirit.

DISCERNMENT

- **Definition:** The general ability to judge well between right and wrong, truth and error, or good and evil.
- **How it works:** It is cultivated over time through spiritual maturity, prayer, and studying the Bible (such as testing teachings against Scripture).
- **Purpose:** Helps everyday believers make godly decisions, avoid deception, and walk in wisdom. All believers are called to practice it (Hebrews 5:14).

DISCERNING OF SPIRITS

- **Definition:** The ability to discern whether a word, action, or appearance is from the Holy Spirit or a demonic spirit.

How it works: It acts like a spiritual scanner that pulls back the curtain to directly perceive into the unseen realm (seeing, hearing, or sensing angels, demonic forces, the human spirit, or the Holy Spirit).

Purpose: Given by the Holy Spirit as He wills to specific individuals to diagnose hidden spiritual realities, expose counterfeits, and protect the church

New Testament commentator Lenski says, "Certain difficult cases occur, for which more than common Christian discernment is necessary. False prophets love to use deceptive language. For the purpose of unmasking these prophets the Lord provides this gift and thus enables his church to turn from lying spirits to the one Spirit of truth." The gift of discernment is the Spirit's special defense against the lies that come from lying Spirits.

Example in Jesus
Matthew 16:21-23