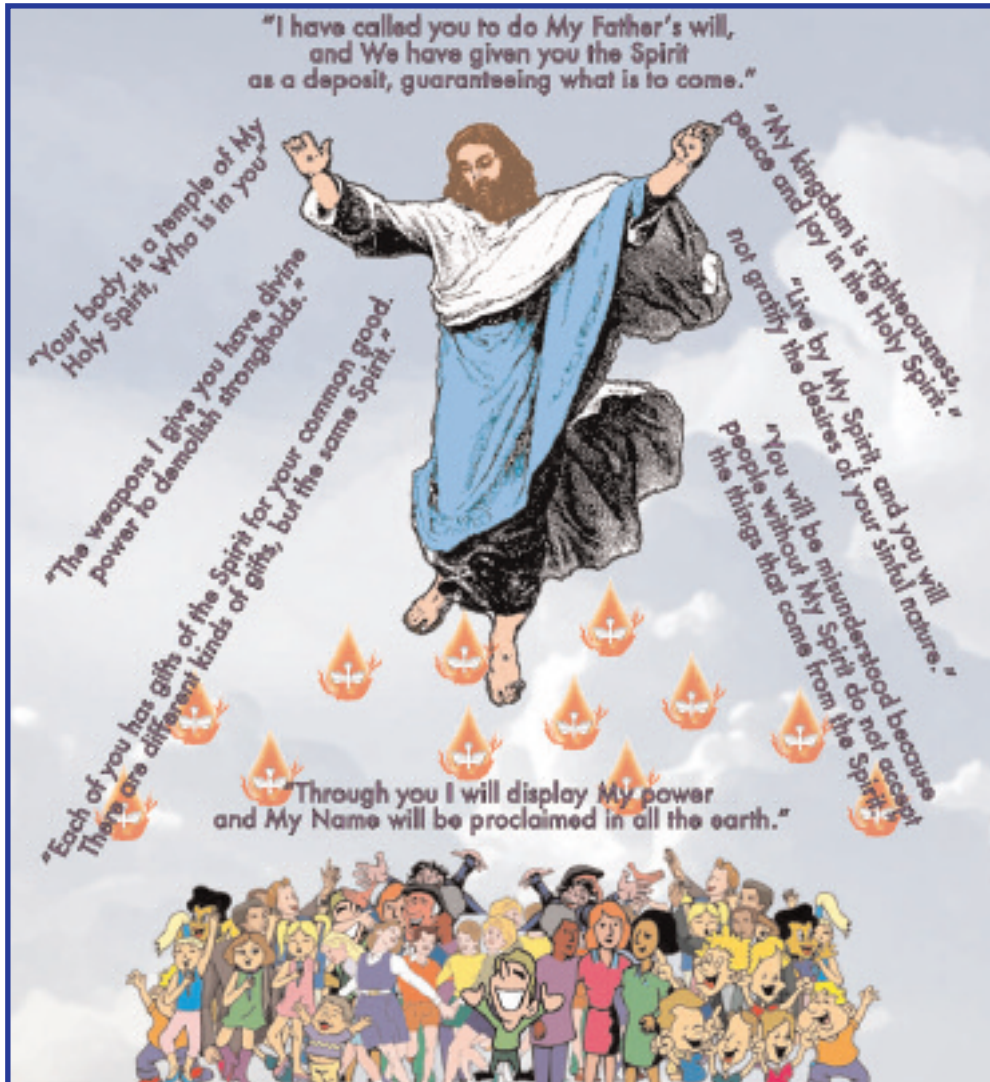


Lifebyte 69

The Hebraic Restoration: *Our Father's Plan to Restore the Spiritual Power of the Early Church*

Lesson 4: What God's People Must Do To Regain Spiritual Power (Part 2)



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"We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us."
(2 Corinthians 4:7)

What God's People Must Do To Regain Spiritual Power (Part 2)

Our heavenly Father draws people to Jesus in a number of ways. We personally responded to His call to follow Jesus as Lord of our lives through reading the Bible and coming under the conviction of His Spirit to yearn for forgiveness and relationship with Him. Overwhelmed with love and gratefulness to our Lord, our hearts pressed into Kingdom living. Out of obedient trust in the Lord we loved, we relied on His Spirit powerfully at work in and through us. Testimonies of His work overflowed to encourage others in His faithfulness!

Then we went off to seminary and became "churched people". His spiritual power diminished to a flicker, and like the proverbial frog in the pot, we weren't even aware of what had happened. How could we *not miss* His power, you ask? Like so many others in religious systems, we chose the path of busyness, racing to keep programs and "ministries" running efficiently. As we'd been taught, we thought that our exhausting, family-neglecting service was what God wanted from us!

As the Hebraic foundations became a way of life for us after our return from Israel in 1994, we've become Kingdom servants of our Lord once again. Maybe our Lord allowed us to experience the seduction of the religious system so we'd understand its hold on people. We don't know. But, what we do know is that only in the Kingdom of our Lord are the life and freedom that Lord Jesus promises!

Recapping Key Parameters of Experiencing Spiritual Power

As the prior three Lifebytes (66 thru 68) on the subject of spiritual power

have made clear, seeking the power of our Lord at work in you calls for intentionally *fleeing evil* and *pursuing righteousness* so that you'll be prepared to serve Him (2 Timothy 2:19-22, apperceiving Numbers 16:5,26).

How do we make sure that we're not committing the "spiritual adultery" of entertaining unseen influences that compete with the Holy Spirit? We rid ourselves of *unconfessed sins* and *demonic strongholds*, and any *deceiving thought processes* (soulsh dominion) that hinder His power from flowing through us (2 Corinthians 10:2-5).

We need to *humbly cry out* to our Lord for His discernment and cleansing work in us so that we'll be available to serve Him. And, we need the help of others close to us in the faith to *confront us* when we entertain old thought processes, attitudes and actions that don't align with God's Word (2 Timothy 4:2).

If we want the mind of Christ in our lives, then we need HIS perspective in these key areas:

- Lord Jesus sees within those who love and serve Him the Presence of *His Spirit in our spirit* as His spiritual Temple (1 Corinthians 6:19). As part of the temple of the living God in our midst (2 Corinthians 6:16), He has prepared each of us for particular service to Him, for the "*good works which God prepared in advance for us to do*" (Ephesians 2:10).

- He is a King Who focused directly on preaching the *good news of the Kingdom* and sent His disciples to do the same (see for example Luke 9:11,62; 17:20,21). When you are born again in spirit through His Spirit, you are recruited and empowered as His servant to advance His Kingdom.

“For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power” (1 Corinthians 4:20)

• The Spirit of the King of the universe resides in each of His followers to teach us all that we need to know to serve Him in loving obedience (John 14:15,26). And what does the life look like of someone who is wholeheartedly serving their beloved King in Spirit and in truth? Like that of His chosen, called-out ones in the Book of Acts! Through His Spirit we are *empowered* to live uprightly, as vessels of His power, love and self-control (2 Timothy 1:7; 1 Thessalonians 1:5).

The choice is yours: to listen and obey your King as Lord, or to serve yourself and spiritually wither. If your heart and spirit are set on being His vessel to use for His joy, then prayerfully review earnestly the truths we share in these four Lifebytes on spiritual power. They point the way to Spirit-empowered Kingdom living that glorifies our Father and our Lord Jesus.



“Therefore every teacher of the Law who has been instructed about the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his store-room new treasures as well as old”
(Matthew 13:52).

Lifebytes 66 thru 68 illustrate the issues you need to address in your own life and in the lives of those in your fellowship family in order to be prepared for our King’s use. If you all have identified and removed the hindrances we discussed in those Lifebytes, then you’re

ready for the power of Jesus to flow through you to carry out whatever He commands you through His Spirit.

Keep in mind that the earliest followers of Jesus were *spiritually powerful* and *relationally intimate* — and that these qualities didn’t spring up in a vacuum! If it’s your heart’s desire to truly understand and walk in these Spirit-empowered dynamics, you need to *keep* exploring and discerning their foundations in the Older Testament as the first disciples did.

They measured all that they were instructed in what we now call the Newer Testament by making sure it aligned with the only scripture they knew, the Hebrew Bible. They allowed that foundation of the Law, which the apostle Paul called “*holy, righteous and good*” (Romans 7:12), to be their yardstick, interpreting everything by the sacred text — just as we who follow Jesus are to do with both Testaments!

All of the spiritual understanding and faith practices we see in the Newer Testament were already part of the *Hebraic* Stream of Judaism before the coming of Jesus — those who loved God and delighted to obey Him because they trusted Him as did their Father Abraham.

Even before the coming of Jesus there were apostles (people sent forth on a mission), prophets, evangelists, and elders who taught those in their care the way of the Lord (Genesis 18:19). These functions didn’t just pop up from nowhere any more than John’s immersion for repentance, or Jesus telling Nicodemus that a person must be “born again.”

Immersion baptism emanates from the practice of the Jewish *mikveh*. The individual had set his heart to *turn away*

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from the defilement of sin and live uprightly, symbolizing this washing away of the old by immersing himself fully and rising up cleansed in spirit. Thus we have *John's baptism for repentance* (Luke 3:3) — turning away from sin and rising up into forgiveness and newness of life.

Paul builds on this immersion of repentance by identifying our "water burial" with the death of Christ — in Him we are *no longer enslaved to sin*. Our rising up out of the water spiritually parallels His resurrection as we present ourselves to God alive from the dead with our bodies as *instruments of righteousness for His use* (Romans 6:4-13).

The need to be "**born again**" began to be taught over 200 years before the coming of Jesus by what we call the "Hebraic stream" of rabbis. A person needed to experience a *spiritual rebirth*, a response to God's call on his life that mirrored the trust-filled relationship of obedience that Abraham had with God. Being *born again* was a shift from following the letter of the Law to living in love-based, obedient relationship with God.

When you were "born from above", you underwent a major change in your spiritual life: from religious practice (or no practice!) to full trust and reliance in the Lord. That's why Jesus was so surprised when Nicodemus professed ignorance of this new birth, which had been known for at least two centuries: "*Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand this?*" (John 3:10).

Because being born again was such a dynamic shift in the way someone related to God, Jesus declared to His listeners that they had to be "*new wineskins*" in order to embrace the New Covenant (Matthew 9:17). This is His same command to us if we've been seduced by the

"Christian" religious system. The intimacy of love-grounded, obedient trust evidenced by the indwelling Spirit is indeed a "new wineskin" of living water!

Our Father had been prophetically revealing His truths to the Hebraic Stream of Judaism in order to prepare those who would become His followers to carry out their part in His Kingdom. All they needed was empowerment from His indwelling Spirit:

You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you; and you will be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth (Acts 1:8; also John 15:26).

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. For the promise is to you and to your children and to all who are far off — as many as the Lord our God will call (Acts 2:38,39).

The key to understanding the manner in which our Lord's spiritual power flows through His followers is to live in complete awareness of *where* that Spirit lives: within in each of us who belongs to Him. God's Word so testifies:

And the one keeping His commandments remains in Him, and He in them. And by this we know that He remains in us: by the Spirit whom He gave to us (1 John 3:24, literal translation)

But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you (Romans 8:11).

Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will

"For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power" (1 Corinthians 4:20)

love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him (John 14:23).

body for building itself in love" (Ephesians 4:11-16, literal translation).

Becoming "a servant of this Good News by God's gracious gift, which He gives us through the operation of His power"
(paraphrase of Ephesians 3:7)

We noted earlier that the roles of apostle, prophet, evangelist and shepherd/teacher were already functioning among the Jewish people when Jesus walked on the earth. It's only as we thoroughly realize God's perspective and purpose for these anointings that we have the basis to restoring spiritual power in our fellowship families. Take your time as you prayerfully read the passage below. Consider the purposes of our Lord in establishing these anointings, and why He intends that they *cooperate together*:

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints [God's people] for the work of service, for the building up of the body of Christ till we all come to the unity of the faith [a unified Body in Jesus] and of the knowledge of the Son of God and become a complete man to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ [being set apart in the character of Jesus],

in order that we no more be infants, being blown and carried around by every wind of teaching and by the cunning cleverness of men in the craftiness of error, but speaking truth in love, we may grow into Him in all respects Who is the Head, that is, Christ, of Whom all the body being fitted together and held together by every supporting ligament according to the working in measure of each part, making for the growth of the

This passage is a "prime directive" from our Lord for His body, His representatives in the flesh as His witnesses to the world. It is His intent that His called-out ones be collectively trained by apostles, prophets, evangelists, and shepherd/teachers. In that way, His own in unity would each do their part in His Kingdom — with ONLY Him as their Head.

The lifeblood of this passage is *spiritual empowerment* in each of His own, beginning with apostle, prophet, evangelist and shepherd/teacher, on through gifts of healing, exhortation, service, discerning spirits, mercy, and others listed by Paul in Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12. The Kingdom of God and our service to our Lord are empowered by the Holy Spirit to meet both spiritual as well as physical needs. None of these services originates in our own strength or personality if our Father is to receive praise from them!

Language Differences Affect Our Biblical Understanding

- **English emphasizes the noun or subject**
- **Hebrew emphasizes the verb, the action**

Nouns and subjects draw your attention to *who or what* your sentence is all about. Hebrew, on the other hand, focuses on *the action* of what's being done, and then secondarily to the person or thing doing it. This difference in emphasis makes it hard for people who are used to concentrating on *who or what* to grasp the underlying sense of *response* to what's said — the *action* that's either already taken place or is being commanded. This is important for you to understand in regard to God's purpose for the anointings of apostle, prophet, evangelist, shepherd/teacher in particular.

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Because of the emphasis of Hebraic thought on *action*, it's not the title of these anointings that's important, but rather, "How do they *function*?" "What do they *do*?" One noted writer states that the entire Hebrew language began as verbs, conveying the importance of active response. To the early followers of Jesus, the terms apostle, prophet, evangelist, and shepherd/teacher would convey the activity implied by the name.

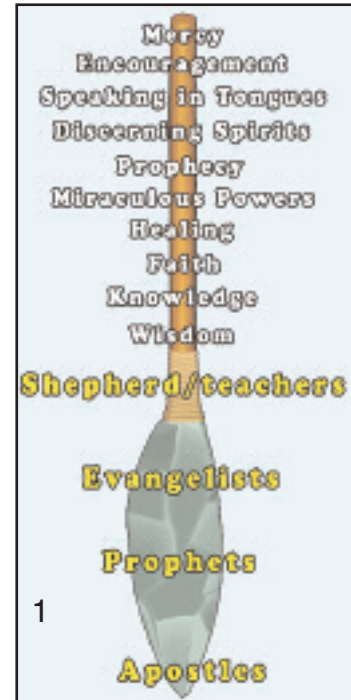
As the result of Greek, Latin and English language influence, most Christians think of these anointings as *ecclesiastical titles of position* rather than as their function within the body. If you're among those with that misconception, please let go of it. Our Father has always intended that the power of *His Spirit at work* in the anointings be an active response of obedience by His people. God receives glory when His Kingdom children operate in His Spirit's anointing! (1 Peter 4:11)

The roles of apostle, prophet, evangelist and shepherd/teacher are written down in order of priority in Ephesians 4:11, similar to the listing in 1 Corinthians 12:28,29 which deletes evangelist but adds workers of powers. This priority is not based on ecclesiastical importance but rather on the sequence of *how they function together*. The spear in **Diagram 1** illustrates this idea.

From our book, *Pastoring By Elders*, we want to review these anointings to help you better understand why our Father wants them restored, and how critical they are to His faith communities today.

- An **apostle** was a person sent forth to an appointed place with a given mission to complete. Picture this function as the tip of a spear, launched to penetrate.

- A **prophet** was one to whom and through whom God spoke for the benefit of His people, particularly to warn them to repent when they went astray. Prophets generally functioned beyond the confines of the Hebrew synagogues. Picture this function as one that guides the spear, keeping it on course.



- An **evangelist** was a synagogue planter and repairer. In the Newer Testament this person not only shares the Gospel, but gathers together a faith community which he will leave in the responsible care of elder shepherd/teachers. Picture this function as the spear finding its mark in people's hearts.

- A **shepherd/teacher** was an older, gray-haired man of leadership who imparted wisdom and counsel to a specific group of people. He rightly divided the Word to bring clarity to others and to exhort them to apply it to their lives. Throughout the Older Testament God relied on the *zakens*, elders, to shepherd His people and discern His will at the city gate as well as within clans and families. This same reliance on older men of wisdom to guide believers was reinforced by Paul's instructions to Timothy and Titus in the Newer Testament. Picture this function as the spear firmly situated

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among the people, carrying on after the apostle, prophet, and evangelist have completed their groundwork.

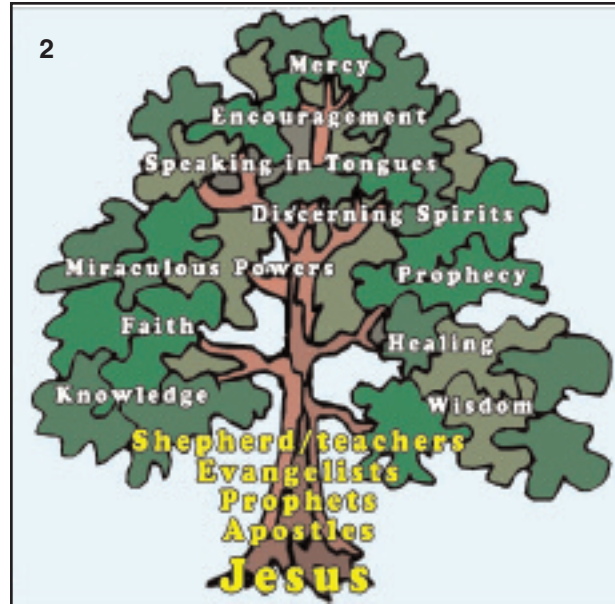
The first three anointings spoken of by Paul to the Ephesian church were apostle, prophet, and evangelist. These functions generally operated beyond the individual faith community, both individually and collectively *spearheading* the advancement of the Kingdom of God according to His will.

As unbelievers are reached with the Good News and enter the Kingdom, the shepherd/teacher serves within newly established faith communities, beginning in their homes. As the older man who functions as Father’s representative in nurturing His children (Titus 1:8,9), he models coming alongside those younger in the walk of obedient trust and helps them discover and serve the rest of the faith family in their Holy Spirit anointings.

To understand the sequence and function of these anointings in conjunction with other gifts of the Spirit, look at the tree, **Diagram 2**. *Jesus* is the Life-giving Root of the tree. It is from the Spirit of Jesus that both guidance and the spiritual power to do His will flow up the trunk.

As we go up the tree, we find the foundational anointings which our Lord uses to equip His people for unity and service. Again, the apostle, prophet and evangelist operate outside a single faith community, while the shepherd/teacher and other gifts operate as they serve their local extended spiritual family.

[For more explanation of these functions, see **Chapter 3. Undoing the Effects of Rule #3 in Pastoring By Elders**; also **Chapter 4. Corporate Warfare Through Spiritual Gift Coordination in God’s Instruments For War — Discovering and Coordinating Spiritual Gifts as Weapons of Warfare**. Both are a free download at our web-site.]



You may be asking, “What happened to these anointings? Why don’t we see them operating the way the earliest followers of Jesus understood and used them?”

To answer these questions, you need to realize that Satan was, and still is, *threatened* by God’s purpose in Ephesians 4:11-16. He’s a deceiver, accuser, and destroyer. When he couldn’t stop the advance of the Kingdom by bringing about Roman persecution of those who loved and followed Jesus, he seduced Christians into joining his heathen Roman empire. Compromise with pagan customs watered down God’s call for “set apart holiness” among His people, targeting those who did stand firm in His Word for even greater persecution.

Through satanic strategy, the government system and organized religion joined forces to produce the Holy Roman Empire. The Roman Catholic hierarchy relegated the anointings of apostle, prophet and evangelist to the first century, effectively quenching any challenge to their own political and ecclesiastical power.

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Centuries of Revisionist writings have confined the anointing of “apostle” to only the Twelve. Yet, the Greek text of the Newer Testament indicates there were others. Multiple Bible translations convert the very apparent “*apostolos*” (apostle) into “messenger” or “emissary”, again wiping away the Holy Spirit empowerment among the irrevocable giftings assigned by Him (Romans 11:29). However, the verb from which “apostle” is derived, *apostello*, clearly means a person *sent forth on a specific mission*. Even Jesus is scripturally designated an “apostle” sent by His Father (John 3:34; Hebrews 3:1)!

Those who received Paul’s epistles had no doubt about the meaning of the word *apostle* nor its functioning through the Spirit to accomplish a purpose. Certainly Paul, Barnabas, Silas and Timothy merit that distinction scripturally (Acts 14:14; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2:6), as well as Andronicus and Junias, who were “*notable among the apostles*” (Romans 16:7).

There were also *false apostles* who had gone forth masquerading as authentic (2 Corinthians 11:13-15). These were *serv-ing Satan* by pretending to be righteous while intent on drawing people away from the truth.

A classic reference to sending forth someone on a Spirit-empowered mission is found in Romans 10:14,15:

How then may they call on One in whom they have not believed? And how may they believe in One of whom they have not heard? And how may they hear without one proclaiming? And how may they proclaim if they are not sent? As it has been written [in Isaiah 52:7]: “How beautiful are the feet of the ones announcing good news of good things!” (literal translation)

Here we have people sent on a mission: to proclaim the Gospel! That very concept of *being sent forth* was clearly understood in the Hebrew Scriptures, as shown not only by the prophetic apprehension from Isaiah but also the reference to the *beautiful feet* — someone was being sent forth somewhere to announce good news!

The anointings of *prophet* and *apostle* were so vital to the Church that the “mystery of Christ” that Gentiles and Israel are heirs together as members of His body (Ephesians 3:4-6) was revealed by the Spirit to *these callings in particular*. Along with the anointings of evangelist and shepherd/teacher, apostles and prophets were to *continue* to train people for Kingdom service (Ephesians 4:11-16).

Tragically, the *ecclesiastical system* that was so influenced by pagan Hellenist thought and Roman organized government gave way to Satan’s schemes. Swayed by the lure of power, the religious hierarchy determined to eliminate people’s awareness of Holy Spirit anointings, especially the biblical Hebraic pattern of older men as shepherds. Their emulation of worldly power succeeded so well that even today so many assert of the religious system, “That’s the way it’s always been!”

But that’s another of Satan’s lies. The *biblical elders* who followed in the footsteps of their Hebraic ancestor Abraham shepherded the Father’s children in Christ. The hierarchical religious system cast down this pattern, introducing young, educated clergy modeled after the Greco/Roman pagan religions. And the result among the “churched” today? Widespread spectator-type passivity that depends on professional clergy to spoon-feed them religious instruction.

“For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power” (1 Corinthians 4:20)

You may be wondering, “Are the clergy of today the shepherd/teachers Paul was referring to?” The answer is an emphatic “NO!” Paul called for *elders* — wise older men modeled after those in his Hebraic heritage. These men personified the character qualities called for in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.

Again, today’s clergy system is of demonic origin, patterned after Greek and Roman paganism. As Revisionist writers painted these lies to be scriptural, the “tree” of spiritual anointings and gifts (see page 6) was cut down. Severed from its root of Jesus’ Lordship, men looked to the religious system for direction rather than to the Holy Spirit for power.



The revision of truth into a system of man-centered deception produced what we see today: a religious stump with clergy in control (Diagram 3).

Yet, our merciful Father is eagerly making known through the Hebraic foundations His way of freeing His own from this devilish system. But it takes the courage of His called-out ones to hear and to follow through in obedient trust.

During the course of our research we came to realize that our God had allowed a curse to come upon the burgeoning system of Christianity. Why? Because so many had embraced the anti-Semitism of the Hellenist "Church Fathers" in the second and third centuries.

But God’s timing to restore His people to the *continuity of His purpose and ways in both testaments* is precise. He has

restored control of Jerusalem to Israel as Jesus prophesied (Luke 21:24). As a banner to the nations He has brought back millions of Jews to the land He had given to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Isaiah 49:22).

And, now, through our Father's desire to restore the Hebraic foundations of love-grounded, obedient trust do we have the opportunity to live in the Lordship of Jesus to serve His Kingdom purposes as Spirit-empowered vessels.

At the core of the Hebraic Restoration is the return of spiritual power to the followers of Jesus. Through loving trust in Him, our Spirit-empowered prayers and responsive obedience can effectively battle the Prince of Darkness and his demonic forces in the unseen heavenlies. The souls of people otherwise bound for hell are at stake!

“Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us...”
(Romans 12:4-6a).

We’ve touched upon the need today for restoration of the Spirit anointings Paul cites in Ephesians 4:11 to equip the saints to serve and to edify the body of Christ. Let’s explore these more to see how critical they are for His collective flock today.

Apostle

“He appointed twelve that they might be with Him and that He might send them

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(2 Corinthians 4:7)

out to proclaim and to have authority to expel the demons" (Mark 3:14,15).

Jesus handpicked twelve particular men whom He intended through intense personal relationship to train through role modeling, through instruction, and through *His power working in them* to do the supernatural.

This spiritual power validated their message of His coming as He sent them out to proclaim the Kingdom in power: *"And having called together the twelve, He gave them power and authority over all the demons and to heal diseases; and He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to cure"* (Luke 9:1,2).

Never intending that His apostles emulate the pattern of pagan authorities through either ecclesiastical titles or arrogant self-regard, Jesus instead commanded a *heart motive to serve* that was modeled by Him: *"You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the nations lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it is not so among you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you shall be slave of all"* (Mark 10:42-44).

Certainly the anointing of apostle didn't mean that you'd be held in high regard or elevated to some exalted status! Look at what Paul himself had to endure in following that anointing: *"For I think that God has showed forth the apostles as last, like men doomed to death. For we become a spectacle to the world, both to angels as well as to men"* (1 Corinthians 4:9, literal translation). As he continues in 4:10-14, we see the suffering and degradation that may accompany those sent forth to serve our Lord's call.

Again, the apostle is God's tip of the spear (**Diagram 1**) for seeing that the

Kingdom in its pure form expands beyond the confines of local faith communities. While apostles may have varied roles, all serve to extend the Kingdom of God.

You're probably aware that some today *call themselves* "apostle", using this term as an ecclesiastical title of rule over some religious system. Usually, it's a clergy person (or someone designated "apostle" by a clergy person) who feels he's graduated to some higher role. Yet only the Holy Spirit authorizes gifting as *He* chooses, despite what man decides! (1 Corinthians 12:11)

On the other hand are some who believe that the ONLY apostles there ever were are the original Twelve. But examination of the scriptural text reveals that this anointing exceeded not only the Twelve but is also among the anointings needed and empowered by the Spirit of Christ today.

Prophet

- *"Pursue love, but eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. The one prophesying to men speaks edification and encouragement and consolation"* (1 Corinthians 14:1,3).

- *"Do not quench the Spirit, do not despise prophecies. Prove all things. Hold fast the good"* (1 Thessalonians 5:19-21).

- *"Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others discern. But if something is revealed to another [prophet] who is sitting, let the first be silent. For you can all prophesy singly, in order that all may learn and all be encouraged. And the spirits of prophets are subject to the prophets"* (1 Corinthians 14:29-32).

- *"For the witness of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy"* (Revelation 19:10). [All the above are literal translations.]

We’ve included several Newer Testament passages here because so much of contemporary Christendom has discarded the gift of prophecy. Many clergy and other religious leaders in particular are threatened by this anointing of the Spirit. But as our Lord indicated in Matthew 23:34-37, their alarm repeats the historical pattern of persecuting the prophets who spoke forth God’s truth to unwilling ears.

From our Father’s perspective, prophets epitomize His merciful heart toward His people! It is out of His mercy that He sends prophets to warn about tolerating unconfessed sin and to encourage His own to keep His commands. In essence, the prophetically gifted person helps keep people out of trouble with God.

Those who prophesy according to the power of the Spirit in them are used as instruments by God to quicken people to pursue righteousness. Out of loving obedience to their Lord, the prophets proclaim a message of holiness: they urge His children to live in obedience to what our Lord commands.

This is the gift Mike received when he first became a follower of Christ. The Spirit began to speak to his spirit, giving him words to share with God’s called-out ones. For eleven years the Holy Spirit used him among religious leaders in New England. They nicknamed him “the enema” because the Spirit would send him into a faith community when tolerated sin was clogging righteousness and the purposes of Jesus. His Spirit-prompted message would both address the sin and speak forth God’s solution.

Within faith communities today the gift of prophecy encourages and strengthens those who yearn to be true to Jesus in fulfilling their Kingdom pur-

pose (Ezra 6:14). And while Paul encouraged prophecy, he also insisted that what was shared be tested and confirmed (see 1 Corinthians 14:29 and 1 Thessalonians 5:19-21, cited above).

The *confirmation of two or three* is God’s rule for validating truth. As Jesus affirmed, “*For where **two or three are having assembled in My name, there am I in the midst of them***” (Matthew 18:20). And Paul reaffirms this pattern of confirmation from both the Older and Newer Testaments: “*Every matter must be established by the testimony of **two or three witnesses***” (2 Corinthians 13:1, apperceived from Deuteronomy 19:15; also Matthew 18:16).

Evangelist

“*But you, be sober in all things, suffer hardship, **do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your service labor***” (2 Timothy 4:5, literal translation).

Christianity has long entitled the “prison letters” of Paul sent to Timothy and Titus as “pastoral” epistles. However, this designation is misleading. These letters were in fact “evangelist” epistles written to his “spearhead” proteges Timothy and Titus who were carrying out their Spirit-empowered service as ***planters and repairers of faith communities***. Like Paul, they spearheaded the spread of the Gospel and established new faith communities among those who responded.

Biblical evangelists not only shared the Gospel message, they *stayed around* until a faith community was gathered, nurtured and placed under the guidance of shepherd/teachers — elders. These elders were older men known and recognized among the faith community to be more mature and diligent in living

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uprightly according to the parameters Paul directed both Timothy and Titus. We get a glimpse of this process of elder anointing in Paul's instructions to Titus: *"For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should **set in order** the things lacking and **appoint in each city elders** [biblical shepherds serving the flock], as I charged you"* (Titus 1:5).

We know that *evangelists* don't have to be older, for Paul encouraged younger Timothy, *"Let **no one despise your youth, but become a pattern** for the believers in speech, in behavior, in love, in faith and in purity"* (1 Timothy 4:12). God needed someone who would serve His purpose of sharing His truth and establishing the Kingdom way of life in each new faith community.

You may be wondering, "If an evangelist stayed in an area until a faith community was formed, how did we end up with the **Evangelism Crusades** that are so popular today?" Sadly, today's "drive-by Gospel drop" never comes close to our Father's intent for this gifting. Instead, this technique produces little lasting fruit. As has been admitted by numerous Crusade officials (and even the name "crusade" has such negative connotation!), only 4-10% of those who "go forward" later stay true to Christ.

And the sad conclusion of those who hear but later fall away? "I've been there and done that!" In fact, the real fruit of crusades is that they inoculate people against any further pursuit of Jesus, the One they never really knew.

This type of evangelism has become so prominent over the past century because well-meaning people failed to apperceive the Bible. Evangelism Crusades have most recently become epitomized by Billy Graham and others.

During the late 1940s pastor Billy Graham was recruited to be an evangelist by the late Dr. Harold Ockenga, the first President of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (Mike's alma mater). In a private conversation one day, Dr. Ockenga stressed to Mike that the most important thing in Christendom was *preaching*.

Mike had just graduated from the Religious Education department, where *mutual cooperation* had been emphasized and no individual's role was more important than another. What a contrast to the Divinity program through which Dr. Ockenga considered it the seminary's duty to "develop great preachers."

As well-meaning as was this man's intent, the crusade-style evangelism method so widely used today has produced sorrowful results. What needs to be *restored* is the biblical evangelist who *shares the Gospel and stays* until a faith community can be gathered as family in the Lordship of Jesus and entrusted to the care of shepherd/teachers among their own relational arena.

Shepherd/Teacher

*"To the **elders among you, I exhort as a co-elder and witness of Christ's sufferings and also the sharer of the glory that is to be revealed: Shepherd the flock of God among you, not by way of compulsion, but willingly according to God; not from eagerness for base gain [greed], but eagerly; not exercising lordship over the people, but becoming examples to the flock"*** (1 Peter 5:1-3, literal translation).

The Newer Testament words for "*shepherd*", "*overseer*", and "*elder*" are generally used interchangeably in the epistles. They all refer to the anointing of older men of wisdom who would be examples of the Father's care for His children. In other words, their compassionate heart

as well as their application of wisdom to the lives of others would be evidence that their motives are right before God.

That they should be capable of bringing clarity to scripture so that it could be applied to life is affirmed by the apostle Paul to the evangelist Timothy: “*Therefore it behooves the overseer to be without reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, orderly, hospitable, able to teach*” (1 Timothy 3:2) 2 Timothy 2:2 also refers to “*faithful men competent to teach others.*”

Paul advised Timothy, “*Let the elders who lead well be deemed worthy of double honor, especially those laboring at communicating the Word and at teaching*” (1 Timothy 5:17). The teaching that’s referred to here does *not* mean conveying the Bible as an academic subject from behind a pulpit. This method so commonly employed today produces Bible knowledge but no life application. People end up erroneously believing, “The more Bible I know, the better off I am with God.” Not true!

In the Hebraic pattern of people seeking wisdom from those who were sharing it, God’s Word was explored and discussed in order to *apply it in obedience to Him*, not examine its content and forget about it! The role of the shepherd in teaching was to discuss biblical truth with those under his care to help them *put it into practice*, as Jesus had counseled (Matthew 25:46-48). That is, they guided them in establishing personal and family *halakhahs* — biblical applications to life situations. (If you’re not familiar with using God’s Word to establish *halakhahs* for yourself and your family, please see our book *Christian Halakhahs* <<http://www.restorationministries.org/HtmlFiles/HTMLBooks/ChristianHalakhahsR.htm>>, a free download at our website.)

Much of what is considered preaching or teaching today from behind pulpits and lecterns has its roots in the rhetorical style introduced to Christianity by the Greek convert, John Chrysostom. One-sided presentation with no interactive response by listeners is Hellenist methodology, not Hebraic. Since the intent of the speaker is to convey content, he has no need of relationship with listeners. In fact, an ominous facet of Hellenist influence was the *separation of clergy from the people* — a system of hierarchy in which levels below had no contact with those above. As many clergy today admit, the lonely place at the top may have power, but little in the way of true friendship.

The Hebraic method of teaching in the earliest Church was patterned after that of their ancestors and the rabbis whose presence was common. Both teachers and learners relied on **personal relationship** and **interpersonal discussion**. The shepherd interacted with the disciples, whom he knew personally on a daily basis and lived among.

The essential first step in discussing a situation was to *apperceive the Biblical foundations* for everything that was being taught. This practice was vital to the Bereans who had access to the Hebrew texts: “*...they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true*” (Acts 17:11).

Like prophecy, teaching needed to be *tested and confirmed* before taking steps to apply it to daily life. Again, the main emphasis of the shepherds and all teaching in the early Church was that it led to righteous application and a way of life that displayed the character of Jesus. Anything less than this violated the commands and teaching of their Lord.

**"We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us."
(2 Corinthians 4:7)**

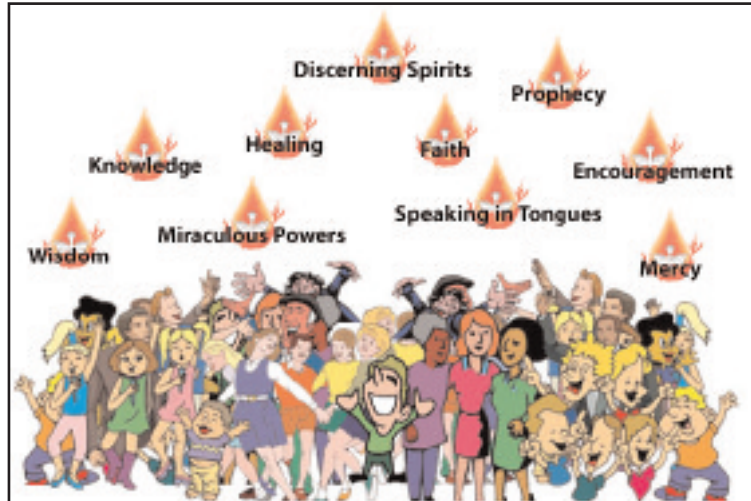
Now you have some understanding of God's purpose for the cooperation of apostle, prophet, evangelist, and shepherd/teacher. But *understanding* doesn't mean it's being lived out! This is where you need to pray and call upon the indwelling Spirit of Christ for guidance and empowerment.

You may not have any of these four anointings. Instead, the Spirit of Christ may have anointed you with one or more

of the other giftings noted in 1 Romans 12:4-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:1-11, 27-31. It's your privilege in Christ to identify and use that which He's given you!

As you seek to be used and empowered by the Holy Spirit, He'll guide you in how to use your gift(s). To be truly effective as a vessel of praise to God, you need to discover and learn to appreciate the gifts of others as well with whom He wants you to cooperate. This is especially true for your marriage, family, and faith community.

- God speaks to *release His message* through gifts such as prophecy and tongues.
- God *reveals truths* through gifts such as apostle, teaching, knowledge, wisdom, evangelism, missions, exhortation, discerning spirits, and interpretation of tongues.
- The Holy Spirit bestows gifts that produce *action to bless others*. These gifts include giving, healing, helping, mercy, and miracles.
- The gift of celibacy frees a person to be *specialty devoted* to the Lord's purposes.



- The gifts of administration and leadership can see the combination of people and goals from God's vantage point and can give *recommendations and guidance* to achieve His purposes.
- The *calm certainty* that gives a believer a "reckless abandon" to the will of God is the gift of faith.
- The gift of shepherding is given to mature men in whom the Father has bestowed *special nurture and compassion* for each person in His flock.

Understanding how the different gifts operate according to the Spirit's guidance and empowerment is key to *establishing cooperation* as they're used. Some believers are *spoken to*, others are *spoken through*, some are *prompted to act*, and still others are *empowered to tend the flock*.

Each of the gifts plays a vital role, and each, like our own body parts, functions differently to fulfill its purpose. Some body parts function solely *inside* the body. The gifts of shepherding and administration are like this. Other body parts operate *outside* the body, such as arms and legs. These may be the apostle, prophet, and evangelist.

**Learn a Lesson from
the Parable of the Talents
(Matthew 25:14-30)**

The material talents in this parable find a parallel in the spiritual gifts that are entrusted to us by the Holy Spirit. As with each man in the parable, *each follower of Jesus is given a gift(s) according to our ability* (Matthew 25:15). We must one day render account concerning our cooperation with the Spirit in advancing the Kingdom through our love, our trust and our obedience.

As noted in the parable, the consequences for negligent disobedience are severe: *“And cast that **useless slave** into the outer darkness, where there will be **weeping and gnashing of teeth**”* (Matthew 25:30).

Heed this warning:

To *disregard* either the Person or purpose of God the Holy Spirit is to blaspheme Him. This is why we must be very careful about the spiritual gifts He apports to us according to His own will. Don't ignore the voice of the Spirit of Christ and live in such a way that brings down the Name of our Lord. Our Father has called you *out of the world's ways* to live as His child and to serve Him. That can only be done in the power of His indwelling Spirit as you obey Him!

How can we be vessels through whom the Spirit flows as He uses the gifting within each of us? We can pay attention to the following:

- ***Our individual and corporate willingness with others in the body to have our gift(s) used signifies our love and devotion to our Lord.***
- ***Our readiness to obey evidences that we are free from all soulsh dominion. The Spirit of Christ, the***

Head of all His called-out ones, rules our mind, will and emotions.

Concluding Thoughts

The Spirit of Jesus in you, in your spouse, your family and faith community, has specifically endued each of you who loves and serves Jesus as their Lord with spiritual giftings. Furthermore, He knows exactly how He intends to use each of you for His purposes. This is why it's so important that you know *each other's gifts* so that you can more readily understand each other in the spirit and cooperate with the guidance the Spirit of Christ will provide.

Unnecessary tensions arise when people fail to know and cooperate with the spiritual gifts of others. This ignorance is one of the key tensions in Christian marriages — lack of knowing and cooperating with each other's gifts.

Kingdom-style parenting role models for your children this beautiful Spirit cooperation that advances our Lord's Kingdom. And, the true functioning of a home fellowship can't take place without relying on the empowerment of the gifts within each member of the extended spiritual family.

If you're really serious about serving the King you love, discuss together **God's Instruments for War — Discovering and Coordinating Spiritual Gifts as Weapons of Warfare**, a free download: <http://www.restorationministries.org/HtmlFiles/HTMLBooks/GIFREntireBookR.htm>

***“We constantly pray for you,
that our God may count you
worthy of His calling,
and that by His power He may fulfill
every good purpose of yours and
every act prompted by your faith”***
(2 Thessalonians 1:11)