

Study 0072

Worship Under the New Covenant (8)

Just as the Lord gave gifts to men, He also gave gifts to the church. The gifts to the church are the men who have been endowed with gifts for spiritual service, chosen, called, and commissioned by God for the primary purpose of building and establishing His Body, the Church, here on earth. These gifts are: Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor, and Teacher. We reviewed these gifts in our last study, and in this study, we intend to focus on them in some detail, but to the extent that they are resources to enable us worship God.

Text: Ephesians 4:7-16

When the Lord ascended into heaven, He gave gifts to men, and some of these gifted men, He chose, called, and commissioned, as gifts to His Body. The gifts Christ gave to the Church are essentially His functions while He was here on earth, divided into five functions. The Lord was described as a gift to the Gentiles (**Isaiah 42:6-7; 49:6-11**); and since leaving the earth, He has put into men the things that made Him such a gift, so these men can then function in His stead (**Acts 13:47**). Thus, the Lord is referred to at various times as, “*the Apostle ... of our confession*” (**Hebrews 3:1**); the Prophet that was to come whom all must heed (**Acts 3:22-23; Deuteronomy 18:15-19**); the Anointed One “*who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil*” (**Acts 10:38**); “*the great Shepherd of the sheep*” or “*Chief Shepherd*” (**Hebrews 13:20; 1 Peter 5:4**); and, the most commonly referred to title of “Teacher” (**Matthew 19:16; Luke 24:19; John 3:2; Matthew 26:18**). So, when the Lord ascended into heaven and gave gifts to men (and to the Church), it was Himself replicated in men, which He gave to the Church. On many occasions, these gifts to the Church can be in one individual, just as they were in the Lord (**1 Timothy 2:7**).

An Apostle is a special messenger of the Lord Jesus Christ, sent with authority to go and be a witness to the people of the world of God’s purpose of salvation to the world (**Mark 3:14-15; Ephesians 3:1-11**). He is a preacher, and a teacher of the word of God (**2 Timothy 1:11**). He is usually a pioneer of the work of God, speaks the mind of God, and, establishes government in the church of God (**Acts 13:1-4; 16:6-10; 14:21-23**). An apostle therefore brings unsaved souls into the kingdom of God through preaching, performing miracles, signs and wonders, and healing the sick; he brings them to spiritual maturity through teachings (and may even pray for them to be baptized in the Holy Spirit); and, he exercises authority in the area of discipline, and in the appointment of leaders in the church (**2 Corinthians 12:12; Acts 8:14-17**). The Apostle, thus, establishes the true worship of God among believers in Christ in the church.

A Prophet is God’s spokesperson, who declares the mind of God to the church (**Acts 13:1-4**), and foretells the future as revealed to him by the Lord (**Acts 11:27-28**). He faithfully communicates God’s mind to the church in general, and to certain individuals as it affects them and the work of God (**Acts 21:10-11**). Thus, he warns of impending danger, reproves against unholy living, corrects wrong doctrines through teachings of biblical truth, and, rightly interprets the intent of the word of God. The Prophet ensures that God is worshipped in spirit and in truth; that is, with the right intent and motive in the Church.

An Evangelist proclaims the good news of the kingdom of God, travelling from place to place, as may be directed by the Holy Spirit (**Acts 8:5-8, 26-40; 10:38; 21:8; 2 Timothy 4:5**). In the course of his ministry, he would usually manifest the demonstration of spiritual gifts, such as revelations, miracles, and healings. He, it is, who usually has the task of

bringing unbelievers into the kingdom of God. The Evangelist, thus, increases the number of true worshippers of God in the Church.

A Pastor is the shepherd of the flock of God, who nourishes and cares for the believers in the local assembly (1 Peter 5:1-3; Psalm 23:1-6; John 10:1-5, 7-9, 10-15). A pastor takes special care of the people of God (1 Timothy 3:4-5). He may have been referred to as 'elder', 'bishop', or 'overseer', who has the task of providing leadership in the local assembly (Titus 1:5). He leads and guides the people of God in the right path through teaching, counselling, and by example (1 Peter 5:1-3). The Pastor ensures that God is worshipped by a spiritually healthy and vibrant flock of true worshippers.

A Teacher is mainly commissioned to instruct and train God's people in the ways of righteous living. His major assignment includes making disciples through sound teaching; correcting false and erroneous doctrines; helping believers in Christ to avoid pitfalls as they adhere to sound biblical teachings; and, establishing God's people in the faith through progressive teachings. The Teacher, thus, progressively teaches the flock of God, the right way to worship God.

ASSIGNMENT

What spiritual and serving gifts would be mostly present in individuals who function in the ministry offices reviewed above?

Apostle: _____

Prophet: _____

Evangelist: _____

Pastor: _____

Teacher: _____

Conclusion

As the divine gifts to individuals enable them to _____ God through their acts of _____ unto God; so also, the gifts to the church enable the church to _____ God in a corporate sense, through their acts of _____ unto God. Just as individuals may _____, _____, _____, and be _____ divine gifts; the gifts to the church can also be subject to _____, _____, _____, and _____. Hence, gifts to the church, when purposefully and productively _____, will bring the Body of Christ to _____

_____ (Luke 1:73-75).