

"To One Is Given ..."

"For to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom and to another the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit ..." (1 Cor. 12:8-9a).

There were nine distinct gifts of the Spirit imparted by the apostles, two of which are introduced above: the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge. Remember, all these enumerated gifts were miraculous, all came as apostles laid hands were laid upon them and while no person had power to choose which distinct gift of the nine he would receive, all were encouraged to earnestly desire such better gifts.

The first gift named was the *"word of wisdom."* Wisdom is understood as the ability to make good and proper decision based upon knowledge which one has. That may very well be its meaning here but it is possible that *"the word of wisdom"* was the power to comprehend the many, many Old Testament prophecies which meanings had aforetime been hidden to the reader. Peter wrote of the desire prophets had to understand things they had written *"... the prophets sought and searched diligently who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching out what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto ..."* (1 Pet. 1:10f). Old Testament worthies were baffled by some things the Holy Spirit caused to be written. Jesus silenced those who questioned him by asking them, *"What think ye of the Christ? Whose son is he?"* When they responded, *"the Son of David,"* Jesus then asked, *"How then doth David in the Spirit call him Lord saying the Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand till I put thy enemies under thy feet? If David then called him Lord, how is he his son?"* (Mt. 22:42-45). The insight through the *"word of wisdom"* enabled those endowed to recognize the Messiah was both Divine and human; the son of man and the son of God. The *"word of wisdom"* would have allowed Peter to perceive that David's word, *"thou wilt not leave my soul unto Hades, neither wilt thou allow thy holy one to see corruption"* (Ps.16:9f), was actually a prediction of the resurrection of Jesus. If this is not the precise meaning of the gift *"the word of wisdom,"* at least it has the advantage of being truth and is not a twisting nor corruption of the text.

To one then was given the *"word of knowledge."* This was a precious gift for long before Jesus' day Hoshea had written, *"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge"* (Hos. 4:6). The Saducees *"erred"* because they knew not the scriptures (Mt. 22:29). It is truth that makes us free and truth is the word of God (Jn. 8:31-32; 17:17).

For ages past God's plan for man's redemption had been hidden in His mind (Eph. 3:9). Before Jerusalem finally was destroyed in the Jeremiah's day and that prospect was a certainty, God had purposed a return of Judah from exile and comforted his people saying, "*For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end*" (Jer. 29:11). Exiled Judah knew God intended their release from captivity and a restoration into their land again. Like Judah, God's thoughts toward all mankind are "*thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end.*" However, despite repeated promises that in Abraham's seed all families of the earth would be blessed, coupled with promises that the suffering One of Isaiah would bear the iniquities of us all (Isa. 53:11), the "hows" and "whats" of this blessing lay shrouded in mystery. Man cannot access God's mind; His thoughts are not our thoughts (Isa. 55:8). Man cannot know the thoughts of another man, how can he possibly know the thoughts of God (1 Cor. 2:11)? So, the blessing God had in mind for man had to be revealed, underscoring the value of the "*word of knowledge.*" The Holy Spirit would refresh the apostles' mind of things Jesus had taught them while He was with them: He would also reveal to them things to come (Jn. 14:26; 16:13). But the apostles could not be in every place at all times. Others were needed who had the same knowledge as the apostles. God's provisions for that need was the gift called "*the word of knowledge.*"

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