
Chapter 8.2

The Gifts of Apostolic Revelation

Divine Wisdom & Knowledge

Table of Topics

- A) Confusion Regarding the Apostolic Gifts of Divine Wisdom and Knowledge**
- B) Their Divine Content & Miraculous Nature**
- C) Their Uniquely Apostolic Nature**
- D) Their Abiding Nature** *Distinguished from prophecy*
- E) Their Limitations**

Extras & Endnotes

Primary Points

- There is a great deal of confusion regarding the gifts of divine wisdom and knowledge today.
- Contrary to many, these gifts are alluded to and described frequently in Scripture.
- The gifts of divine wisdom and knowledge consisted of new extra-biblical revelation from God which is why we refer to it as a *Scripture gift*,
- Just as the gift of prophecy is synonymous with a God-sent Prophet, the gifts of divine wisdom and knowledge are rather synonymous with a God-sent NT revelatory Apostle.
- The abiding and more general supernatural knowledge of NT Apostles has historically been distinguished from the more spontaneous and specific revelation of Prophets. This may be the best explanation of why Paul considers the gift of Apostleship "**first**" and Christian "**Prophets second**" "**in the church**" (1 Cor 12:28).
- By *abiding* revelation we mean that the gifts of divine wisdom and knowledge gave the Apostles a store or depository of divine knowledge to write from, rather than being directly, spontaneously, and continuously "inspired" as they wrote.
- The Apostles possessed divine knowledge, but not omniscient knowledge.

A) The Confusion Regarding the Apostolic Gifts of Divine Wisdom and Knowledge

It could be argued that Apostles such as Paul possessed virtually every spiritual gift listed in the NT. Accordingly, John Chrysostom (c. 347–407) taught that God, “set the Apostles first who had all the gifts in themselves.”¹ Nonetheless, it was the miraculous gifts of divine wisdom and knowledge that we believe were particularly connected to Apostleship.

Such gifts are clearly mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12 where, in the context of miraculous spiritual gifts, Paul says: **“To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom [*logos sophias*], to another the message of knowledge [*logos gnōsiōs*] by means of the same Spirit”** (1 Cor 12:8).²

There is a great deal of confusion regarding these gifts today. Even a careful NT scholar such as Leon Morris (1914-2006) writes, “It is not easy to see what they are.”³ The *super-supernaturalist*⁴ theologian Wayne Grudem goes even further and claims:

[T]hese two gifts are nowhere else mentioned in Scripture, and no other early Christian literature outside the Bible has been found to use these phrases of any spiritual gift either. This means that the only information we have about these gifts is contained in this verse [1 Cor 12:8]. . . . No interpreter anywhere has any more information than this to work with.⁵

The Pentecostal NT scholar Gordon Fee likewise writes, “this particular ‘gift’ does not appear again in any further list or discussion,” and suggests Paul received these labels from the Corinthians, because the concepts were otherwise unknown.⁶

Dr. Grudem’s and Dr. Fee’s assertions are simply untrue. While the exact phrases “*logos sophias*” or “*logos gnōsiōs*” may not be found elsewhere, we believe it will become clear in the discussion below that these gifts are alluded to and described frequently in Scripture, and also appear in early Christian literature.

Here we wish to demonstrate several attributes of the gifts of divine wisdom and knowledge that are commonly ignored or denied. These include:

- 1) Their divine content and miraculous nature which addresses the common notion that these gifts are simply describing really but naturally intelligent people.
- 2) Their practically exclusive relationship to revelatory Apostles of Jesus Christ in the NT which will address the view in *charismaticism*⁷ that those claiming clairvoyant powers in the Church possess these gifts.

- 3) Their provision of a store of divine knowledge from which the Apostles wrote rather than the common notion of a continuous "inspiration."

Not surprisingly, many teachers in *charismaticism* view the gifts of divine knowledge and wisdom as supernatural in nature. Referring to the gift of wisdom, Dr. Fee writes:

In Pentecostal and charismatic circles this "gift" is often understood to be that special word of insight given by the Spirit when the community is going through a time of difficulty or decision.⁸

Likewise, another leader of *charismaticism*, Michael Green, writes: "If we compare the passage here with I Corinthians 13:2 and 14:6 it becomes apparent that Paul is speaking of some revelatory word from God for the benefit of others."⁹

Nonetheless, in other Evangelical circles it has been common to deny the miraculous and revelatory nature of the gifts of divine wisdom and knowledge. This is perhaps in response to the great deal of error and abuse that has occurred in *charismaticism* regarding these gifts. Accordingly, instead of a supernatural explanation for these gifts, there has been a multitude of different, more natural definitions of these gifts related more to teaching, counseling, or just being smart, rather than the reception of divine revelation.¹⁰

Such a perspective is certainly not new, however. The ancient and influential Church leader Origen (c. 185-c. 254) indicated that the spiritual gift of knowledge was merely a gift given in order to *understand* what the Apostles wrote:

Now it ought to be known that the holy Apostles, in preaching the faith of Christ, delivered themselves with the utmost clearness on certain points which they believed to be necessary to every one, even to those who seemed somewhat dull in the investigation of divine knowledge; leaving, however, the grounds of their statements to be examined into by those who should deserve the excellent gifts of the Spirit, and who, especially by means of the Holy Spirit Himself, should obtain the gift of [understanding various] language [e.g. Greek and Hebrew], of wisdom, and of knowledge.¹¹

Augustine (354-430) seemed to suggest that particularly the gift of knowledge related to "human things" rather than divine things, and that it was more a gift of human rationality, rather than divine revelation.¹² On the other hand, Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) distinguished the gift of wisdom from mere "cognition,"¹³ and in his

commentary on 1 Corinthians described both the gifts of wisdom and knowledge as, “knowledge of divine things”¹⁴ and “knowledge . . . divinely infused as in the apostles”¹⁵

Ignoring its supernatural aspects, John Calvin (1509-1564) commented on 1 Corinthians 12:8: “Let us then take *knowledge* as meaning *ordinary information*.”¹⁶ The very popular 19th century NT scholar Albert Barnes (1798–1870) wrote of these gifts: “The sense is, that one man would be prominent and distinguished as a wise man—a prudent counselor, instructor, and adviser.”¹⁷

On the other hand, the great “Old Princeton” theologian Charles Hodge (1797-1878) believed that the gift of wisdom was exclusively apostolic and revelational, while the gift of knowledge, “is probably to be understood the gift which belonged to teachers . . . the gift correctly to understand and properly to exhibit the truths revealed by the Apostles and Prophets.”¹⁸ More recently, the popular NT commentator William Barclay (1907–1978) also interprets the gift of knowledge in a rather ordinary, non-miraculous way as, “the knowledge which knows what to do in any given situation.”¹⁹

While both Augustine and Calvin were willing to suggest the gift of wisdom was divine and miraculous, while the gift of knowledge was not, later expositors have not seen any miraculous or divine nature in either of them. NT scholar D. A. Carson simply writes of the spiritual gifts of “**words of wisdom**” and “**words of knowledge**” (1 Cor 12:8) that: “It is not clear that the content of such messages was invariably what could not have been known any other way.”²⁰

Likewise, the respected Bible teacher John MacArthur states that although these gifts “may have been revelatory in the first century,” they currently operate in a way that is rather synonymous with the gift of teaching the Scriptures. Therefore, the gift of wisdom is, “the ability to make skillful and practical application of the truth to life situations [including drawing] from the many insights and interpretations of commentators and other Bible scholars.” The gift of knowledge is described similarly by Dr. MacArthur as “a special ability to study His Word and discover the full meaning of the text.”²¹ This is similar to the view expressed in two well known studies in the 1970’s by Arnold Bittlinger, and even the Pentecostal Donald Gee.²²

Perhaps most surprising is Dr. Grudem’s denial that these gifts involve miraculous and divine revelation. This foremost theologian of *charismaticism* writes:

[My own] interpretation of these gifts would see them as more “non-miraculous” or ordinary: the “word of wisdom” simply means the ability to speak a wise word in various situations, and “word of knowledge” is the ability to speak with

knowledge about a situation. In both cases the wisdom and knowledge would not be based on a special revelation spontaneously given by the Holy Spirit, but would be based on wisdom acquired in the ordinary course of life, the wisdom and knowledge that would be characteristic of Bible teachers or elders and other mature Christians in a church, for example.²³

B) Their Divine Content & Miraculous Nature

What kind of “**wisdom**” and “**knowledge**” do these gifts provide then?²⁴ Despite several claims today to the contrary, there are several reasons to claim they relate to *miraculous* wisdom and knowledge through divine revelation.

First, we notice that the gifts are described as a “**message**” given “**through the Spirit,**” or “**by means of the same Spirit.**” In other words, these gifts produced messages directly from the Spirit. This is not the case of Teachers who get their messages from Scripture. Indeed, the Spirit gifts them with a special desire and ability to interpret, apply, and communicate Scripture, but Scripture is the source of their message, not the Spirit directly. Accordingly, these gifts do not refer to teaching as many above claim.

Secondly, these gifts are found in a list of exclusively miraculous gifts:

To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit,⁹ to another [miracle] faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit,¹⁰ to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. (1 Cor 12:8-10)

We have argued elsewhere that the Apostle is not speaking here of a merely human faith, but a *miracle faith*,²⁵ nor would we think is the “**distinguishing of** [invisible, demonic or angelic] **spirits**” merely a human ability as well. Likewise, “**tongues**” and their “**interpretation**” is clearly meant to require miraculous abilities from God.²⁶ Most definitely this is the case with “**healing . . . effecting of miracles . . . [and] prophecy.**” Therefore, when we find in the same list, “**the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and . . . the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit,**” it is best to conclude that these too are miraculous gifts producing

something that merely human wisdom, knowledge, effort, study, and experience cannot—namely divine revelation.

Accordingly, Charles Hodge wrote in his commentary on 1 Corinthians:

There are gifts of the Spirit which are ordinary and permanent, such as those of teaching and ruling, but they are not included in this enumeration, which embraces nothing which was not miraculous, or at least supernatural.²⁷

Contrary to Drs. Grudem and Fee quoted above, 1 Corinthians 12:8 is not the only reference to the gifts of divine wisdom and knowledge. Just a few verses later the Apostle is clearly referring to the spiritual gifts he has just mentioned when he writes: “**Love never fails. But where there are [the gift of] prophecies, they will cease; where there are [the gift of] tongues, they will be stilled; where there is [the gift of] knowledge, it will pass away**” (1 Cor 13:8; cf. 13:2). Even if one interprets Paul as saying that these gifts pass away at the Second Coming of Christ, the natural definition of the gift of knowledge espoused by some above does not fit. For example, Dr. Grudem wrote above: “the “word of wisdom” simply means the ability to speak a wise word in various situations, and “word of knowledge” is the ability to speak with knowledge about a situation.” Will these abilities cease in the eternal Kingdom Age on the New Earth. We do not believe so. Even more so, taking our view that Paul expected these gifts to cease with the completion of the NT revelation, gives us even more reason to understand them in a more supernatural way.

Other references to these gifts reflect their supernatural nature as well. Accordingly, the Apostle is no doubt referring to these very gifts earlier in 1 Corinthians when he writes:

We [Apostles of Jesus Christ²⁸] . . . speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden. . . .

None of the rulers of this age understood it. . . . [A]s it is written: ‘No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him’-- but God has revealed it to us [the Apostles] by His Spirit [through the miraculous gifts of supernatural wisdom and knowledge]. . . .

[N]o one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit Who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak,

not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. . . . we [Apostles of Jesus Christ] have the mind of Christ. (1 Cor 2:6-13, 16)

What the Apostle describes here in chapter 2 of this epistle as the supernatural ability to “**speak a message of wisdom . . . by the Spirit . . . in words taught by the Spirit**” (vs. 6, 10, 13) is, no doubt, the same thing as a miraculous gift of being “**given through the Spirit the message of wisdom**” in chapter 12 (v. 8).

And there is also no doubt that this gift, as described in 1 Corinthians 2, involves divine revelation, as it is contrasted with, “**the wisdom of this age**” (v. 6) and “**words taught . . . by human wisdom**” (v. 13). The result of these gifts is that the Apostles had “**the mind of Christ**” (v. 16) such that they possessed a store of supernatural knowledge from which they spoke and wrote. And would we not expect biblical references to special revelatory gifts for the Apostles who had the responsibility to communicate the very words of God (cf. 1 Thess 2:13; 1 Jn.4:6)?

Accordingly, when the Apostle Paul defends the authenticity and uniqueness as a revelatory Apostle to the Corinthians he writes:

I do not think I am in the least inferior to those [false] “super-apostles.” I may not be a trained speaker, but I do have [divine, supernatural] knowledge. We have made this perfectly clear to you in every way. (2 Cor 11:5-6)

The Apostle is obviously not talking about mere human knowledge such as algebra or science. Nor is he speaking of his great knowledge of the OT as a member of the Sanhedrin. He is speaking of a superior knowledge of God’s New Covenant revelation that sets him apart from the false apostles. He is speaking of a divine endowment that authenticated him as an Apostle of Jesus Christ.²⁹ It is suggested here that he is speaking specifically about the gift of divine wisdom and knowledge that Apostles like him possessed enabling them to communicate new extra-biblical revelation from God.

Again, the Apostle would seem to clearly describe these gifts when he writes the Ephesians:

Surely you have heard about the administration of God’s grace [*charitos*: a spiritual gift] that was given to me for you, that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my [supernatural] insight into the mystery of Christ, which

was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy Apostles and Prophets.

This mystery is that through the Gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. I became a servant of this Gospel by the gift of God's grace [chariots: not salvation- but spiritual gifts of apostleship and divine wisdom and knowledge] given me through the working of His power.

Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace [i.e. gift of supernatural wisdom and knowledge] was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. His intent was that now, through the church, [and the gifts of divine wisdom and knowledge] the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms. (Eph 3:2-10)

Again, it would seem the Apostle Paul is describing a gift of divine wisdom and knowledge.

More specifically, these gifts of divine wisdom and knowledge were used to write Scripture. Accordingly, we read in 2 Peter:

Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the [miraculous gift of divine] wisdom that God gave him. . . . His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction. (3:15-16)

Here it is clear that the early Church believed that a divine gift of wisdom enabled an Apostle such as Paul to write divinely authoritative "**Scriptures.**" It is equally clear here that the reference to "**wisdom**" refers to the miraculous kind.

In addition, we have noted in the previous chapter that Jesus was labeled an Apostle in the early Church and accordingly, we believe He alludes to the gifts of divine wisdom and knowledge He possessed when He says:

"My teaching is not My own. It comes from Him Who sent Me. . . . My teaching comes from God" (John 7:16).

"I do nothing on My own but speak just what the Father has taught Me" (John 8:28).

“The Father Who sent Me commanded Me what to say and how to say it . . . So whatever I say is just what the Father has told Me to say” (John 12:49-50).

“The words I say to you are not just My own. Rather, it is the Father, living in Me, Who is doing His work” (John 14:10)

“Everything that I learned from My Father I have made known to you” (John 15:15)

[Praying to the Father] **“I gave them the words You gave Me”** (John 17:8)

While we would fully maintain the deity of Christ, His humanness is revealed in the fact that He repeatedly claimed that His divine knowledge was received from the Father, and not inherent at birth, and at least the references above could be described as a gift of divine wisdom and knowledge.³⁰ Likewise, we believe Christ was referring to such a revelatory gift when He told His disciples: **“The [supernatural] knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of Heaven has been given to you, but not to them [the masses]”** (Matt 13:11-12).

The gifts of divine wisdom and knowledge also seem to be described in the OT. In Isaiah’s prophecy of Christ he says, **“The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him—the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD”** (Isa 11:2). Likewise, we read, **“God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore”** (1 Kgs 4:29; cf. Deut 34:9). Clearly this is a spiritual gift of supernatural wisdom and knowledge. Along the same lines, we read of the craftsman **“Bezalel”** whom God, **“filled . . . with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts”** (Exod 35:31).³¹

Early Church leaders saw the revelatory gifts of wisdom and knowledge in Scripture as well, and believed these gifts to be particularly attached to the Apostles. Polycarp (c. 69-c. 155), Bishop of Smyrna, writes in his *Epistle to the Philippians*:

I am writing you these comments about righteousness, brothers, not on my own initiative but because you invited me to do so. For neither I nor anyone like me can keep pace with the [gift of divine] wisdom of the blessed and glorious Paul, who, when he was among you in the presence of the men of

that time, accurately and reliably taught the word concerning the [new divine] truth. And when he was absent he wrote you letters; if you study them carefully, you will be able to build yourselves up in the faith that has been given to you.³²

Justin Martyr (c. 100-165) believed these gifts were supernaturally revelatory when he wrote: "Solomon possessed the spirit of wisdom, Daniel that of understanding and counsel . . . Isaiah that of knowledge."³³ Tertullian (c. 160-c. 225) said of the gifts of wisdom and knowledge in 1 Corinthians 12:8, "this we see at once is what Isaiah declared to be "the spirit of wisdom" and the "spirit of understanding and counsel" which are obviously miraculous revelatory gifts in Isaiah 11:2 as noted above.³⁴ Theodore of Mopsuestia (c. 350-428) believed that while Solomon did not have the spiritual gift of prophecy, he did have the spiritual gift of "wisdom."³⁵ Finally, Hilary of Poitiers (315-367) wrote:

Hence it is by these miraculous workings that the manifestation of the Spirit takes place. For the gift of the Spirit is manifest, where wisdom makes utterance and the words of life are heard, and where there is the knowledge that comes of God-given insight, lest after the fashion of beasts through ignorance of God we should fail to know the Author of our life.³⁶

Fast-forwarding to the 18th century, Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) agreed that the gifts of wisdom and knowledge involved direct divine revelation and wrote:

But by that knowledge which the Apostle here speaks of [at 1 Cor 13:8ff], which he says shall vanish away, he means only a particular, miraculous gift which there was in the church of God in those days; for the Apostle is here comparing charity with the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, as has been heretofore observed. There were various extraordinary gifts of the Spirit given by inspiration which were then common in the church. . .

You see that a gift of knowledge is mentioned among these, which was a different thing both from that speculative knowledge which is obtained by reason and study, or that spiritual and divine knowledge which persons have by the saving influence of the Spirit on the soul. It was a particular gift of the Spirit with which some persons were endued whereby they were enabled by immediate inspiration to understand mysteries, or the mysterious prophecies and types of Scripture.

The Apostle speaks of this in the second verse of this chapter: 'Though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge.' It is this miraculous gift which the Apostle says shall vanish away, together with other miraculous gifts of the Spirit, such as prophecy and the gift of tongues.³⁷

The revered OT scholar from Moody Bible, Merrill F. Unger (1909-1980) wrote of these gifts:

"Knowledge," of course, was not truth taught by the Spirit through the Word, but truth revealed directly before the Word was revealed in the completed New Testament Scriptures. . . . Both "prophecy" and "knowledge," therefore, were of necessity "tie-overs" to supply the church's practical needs until the New Testament Scriptures became available.³⁸

Several modern NT scholars agree that the gifts of wisdom and knowledge as expressly mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:28 were supernatural and revelatory in nature. These include Leon Morris, Robert Thomas, and Anthony Thiselton.³⁹

We see then that these gifts of wisdom and knowledge were miraculous in the fact that their result was not obtained by merely natural, human means. Therefore, their result was supernatural knowledge.⁴⁰

For example, these gifts gave the Apostles knowledge of events in Christ's life in which they were not physically present. Accordingly, the Apostle John relates the story of Christ's interaction with a Samaritan woman which took place while, "**His disciples had gone into the town to buy food**" (John 4:8). While it is possible that John's reference here did not include Himself, or that Christ related the incident after His disciples returned, neither of these are the impression that John gives in the text, but rather, it would seem the incident was given to John by way of miraculous revelation, such as was promised Him by Christ (cf. John 14:26). Likewise, the Apostle Paul "**received from the Lord**" (1 Cor 11:23) the events of the Passover meal on Christ's final night, because he was not present. We would offer this same explanation for how the Apostle Matthew knew of Christ's forty day temptation in the desert by the devil (cf. Matt 4:1-11).⁴¹

In light of the above, we would again disagree with Dr. Grudem's arguments that the gifts of a "**word of wisdom**" and a "**word of knowledge**" (1 Cor 12:8) were not miraculous and revelatory in nature. His foundational error would seem to be the suggestion that 1 Corinthians 12:8 is, "the only information we have about these gifts . . . No interpreter anywhere has any more

information than this to work with.”⁴² We have already demonstrated otherwise.

Dr. Grudem then has three arguments against the view that these gifts were miraculous and revelatory in nature. First, he suggests that the words “wisdom” and “knowledge” “are not specialized or technical terms” but rather are used here “for human wisdom and knowledge.”⁴³ However, Paul specifies that the “**wisdom**” and “**knowledge**” he speaks of is “**through the Spirit**,” clearly suggesting a supernatural nature to them.

Secondly, Dr. Grudem says his “most decisive” argument is that miraculous and revelatory gifts of divine wisdom and knowledge would be exactly what prophecy is. Indeed, while we argue below that these gifts had a special relationship with the NT Apostles, biblical Prophets would seem to have at times demonstrated their attributes as well (cf. Eph 3:5; Num 24:15-16; Dan 2:21-23; 5:14; 1 Cor 13:2). (Eph 3:2-5; cf.)

However, it would seem the Apostle also distinguished the gift of knowledge from prophecy when he wrote: “**brothers, what good will I be to you, unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or word of instruction?**” (1 Cor 14:6). He certainly distinguishes them in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 where he lists the gifts of “**wisdom . . . [and] knowledge**” (v. 8) separately from the gift of “**prophecy**” (v. 10).

Finally, Dr. Grudem denies that the list of gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 are entirely miraculous because Paul intends to make all Christians feel like an equally valuable part of the body no matter what their gift.⁴⁴ Therefore, according to him, Paul would intentionally want to mix miraculous with non-miraculous gifts in this list. Accordingly, because all the rest of the gifts in this list are miraculous, the gifts of wisdom and knowledge must not be. On its own, and apart from the considerations above, this argument has some merit, as the promotion of equality is surely one of Paul’s intentions in this passage. However, as pointed out elsewhere, at least an equally important purpose of Apostle is teaching the Corinthians to distinguish genuine miraculous manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the congregation from faked or pagan ones (cf. 1 Cor 12:1-3).⁴⁵ It is clear that the issue for the Corinthians is the miraculous gifts, which is why the Apostle lists them in this passage.

In the end, we agree with others that the gifts of, “**the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and . . . the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit**” (1 Cor 12:8) involve miraculous divine revelation.

In summary, we suggest that the gifts of divine wisdom and knowledge consisted of new extra-biblical revelation from God.

When it operated in a person, they were able to either speak or write the very thoughts of God, and therefore with the very authority of God. This is precisely why we refer to it in this study as a *Scripture gift*, and it is what made an Apostle of Jesus Christ who they were.

C) Their Uniquely Apostolic Nature

While *charismaticism* generally teaches that the gifts of divine wisdom and knowledge involve supernatural revelation, not surprisingly, they also insist that virtually any Christian could possess them. We noted above Dr. Fee's description of divine wisdom as a "special [extra-biblical] word of insight given by the Spirit when the community is going through a time of difficulty or decision." Likewise, Dr. Green says the gift of knowledge, "is a particularly valuable gift for the Christian counselor, who needs to know the heart of the person to whom he is speaking."⁴⁶

We would suggest that while Dr. Green is correct in claiming these gifts involved divine revelation, he has no biblical support whatsoever to suggest they were or are the common possession of Christian counselors for the clairvoyant purpose of enabling them to know the private thoughts of a person.⁴⁷

All of the NT references noted above describe the gifts of divine wisdom and knowledge in the context of the Apostles (cf. 1 Cor 2:6-13; 2 Cor 11:5-6; Eph 3:2-10). Nonetheless, such wisdom from divine revelation was experienced by OT characters as well. For example, "**Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'Since God has made all this [future events] known to you, there is no one so discerning [bin: "insight"] and wise [chakam] as you'**" (Gen 41:39). Joseph's divine revelation of the future is described as being "**wise.**"

Likewise, we read that, "**Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds**" (Dan 1:17), and this is described as supernatural wisdom from God:

During the night the mystery [of Nebuchadnezzar's dream] was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of Heaven and said: "Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever . . . He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning. He reveals deep and hidden things [that can only be known by divine revelation]. (Dan 2:19-22)

Nevertheless, revelatory wisdom in the NT is attributed exclusively to the Apostles. This is abundantly clear in 2 Peter

where we read: "Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother [and Apostle] Paul also wrote you with the [gift of divine] wisdom that God gave him" (3:15-16). Likewise, we've already noted that Paul defended his claim to apostleship by specifically claiming the gift of divine knowledge (cf. 2 Cor 11:5-6).

We would suggest the rather exclusive relationship between these gifts and the Apostles is also evidenced in 1 Corinthians 12 itself by the order of the two lists of gifts given. The first list (vs. 8-10) lists the gifts of divine wisdom and knowledge first and omits Apostles. The second list (v. 28) lists Apostles first and omits the gifts of divine wisdom and knowledge. This suggests to us that the gifts of divine wisdom and knowledge are rather interchangeable with Apostles.

Charles Hodge agreed regarding the gift of wisdom and wrote concerning 1 Corinthians 12:

That gift [of divine wisdom] stands first as the most important, and as the characteristic gift of the Apostles, as may be inferred from v. 28, where the arrangement of offices to a certain extent corresponds with the arrangement of the gifts here presented. Among the gifts, the first is the word of wisdom; and among the offices, the first is that of the Apostles. It is perfectly natural that this correspondence should be observed at the beginning, even if it be not carried out. This gift in its full measure belonged to the Apostles alone . . .⁴⁸

The claim that these gifts were the rather exclusive possession of Apostles is suggested as well by Paul's intentional choice of prophecy as the gift that the Corinthian congregation should be seeking, rather than knowledge or wisdom. This implies that Paul expected some in a church to have the gift of prophecy, but not the gifts of divine wisdom and knowledge, because only Apostles normally possessed these.

This is perhaps reflected in his statement: "**Now, brothers, if I [a revelatory Apostle] come to you and speak in tongues, what good will I be to you, unless I bring you some revelation or [divine] knowledge or prophecy or word of instruction?** (1Cor 14:6). Here, we would suggest, is a reference to the gift of divine knowledge that Paul had claimed earlier in the letter (cf. 2:6-13). We can contrast this with Paul's description of what he expected in the Corinthian congregation in his absence where it would seem he intentionally leaves out "**knowledge**":

What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together [in the absence of revelatory Apostles], everyone

has a hymn, or a word of instruction [lit. "teaching"], **a revelation** [from prophecy], **a tongue or an interpretation.** **All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church.** (1 Cor 14:26)

We would suggest that the reference here to "**revelation**" in the congregation refers specifically to the gift of prophecy that Paul has been promoting throughout the passage, but does not name as prophecy here, as he did in 14:6. Therefore, while promoting the gifts of divine wisdom and knowledge would have had the same effect as promoting prophecy, in the context of promoting gifts of divine revelation over tongues, Paul does not use the former gifts because they were the rather exclusive possession of Apostles.

Likewise, in Paul's discussion of the cessation of the miraculous gifts he specifically picks out divine knowledge, prophecy, and tongues (cf. 1 Cor 13:8). We suggest he chooses knowledge and prophecy because these were the most important gifts, knowledge referring to apostleship which was ranked "**first**," and prophecy being ranked "**second**" (cf. 1 Cor 12:28).

We would further claim that the promises of divine revelation given by Christ to the Twelve were specifically a promise of the gifts of divine wisdom and knowledge. Christ said:

I will ask the Father, and He will give you . . . the Spirit of truth. . . . All this I have spoken while still with you. But the . . . Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. . . .

But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth [divine knowledge]. He will not speak on His own; He will speak only what He hears, and He will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to Me by taking [divine knowledge] from what is Mine and making it [divine knowledge] known to you. (John 14:16-17, 25-26; 16:13-14)

If these are references to the gifts of divine wisdom and knowledge which the Apostles possessed, then they are evidence that these gifts were essentially intended for the Apostles, because, as we argue elsewhere, these promises were meant only for the revelatory Apostles.⁴⁹

The early Church, as well, considered these gifts of divine wisdom and knowledge to be equated with Apostles of Jesus Christ. Tertullian states that God did not give these gifts to just any men, but to "choice men, Apostles."⁵⁰ Likewise, Clement of Alexandria wrote that these gifts were "apostolic."⁵¹ Irenaeus (c. 180)

believed that the Apostles had an exclusive divine gift of “perfect knowledge” that distinguished them from others who were claiming the same in his day. He wrote:

We have learned from none others the plan of our salvation, than from those through whom the Gospel has come down to us, which they did at one time proclaim in public, and, at a later period, by the will of God, handed down to us in the Scriptures, to be the ground and pillar of our faith. For it is unlawful to assert that they preached before they possessed “perfect knowledge,” as some do even venture to say, boasting themselves as improvers of the Apostles. For, after our Lord rose from the dead, [the revelatory Apostles] were invested with power from on high when the Holy Spirit came down [upon them], were filled from all [His gifts], and had perfect knowledge.⁵²

Likewise, Chrysostom (347-407) would seem to have limited the gifts of divine wisdom and knowledge to the apostolic Age when he writes in his commentary on 1 Corinthians 12:8 that, “such [gifts] used to occur but now no longer take place.”⁵³

Therefore, the biblical gifts of divine wisdom and knowledge were not for the ordinary Christian but were given to those who were messengers of new, extra-biblical divine revelation authoritative for the entire Church, and worthy to be written as Scripture. Therefore, in a very real sense, just as the gift of prophecy is synonymous with a God-sent Prophet,⁵⁴ the gifts of divine wisdom and knowledge are rather synonymous with a God-sent NT revelatory Apostle.

D) Their Abiding Nature: *Distinguished from prophecy*

As noted above, the Scriptures clearly distinguish the gifts of divine wisdom and knowledge from that of prophecy, although it is less clear as to how they are different. It would seem the clearest difference in these gifts is that those of the Apostles operated in a more *abiding* way with a more general application to the universal Church, while prophetic revelation came in a more spontaneous way with a more specific application to an individual or local church. By *abiding* revelation we mean that the gifts of divine wisdom and knowledge gave the Apostles a store or depository of divine knowledge to write from, rather than being directly, spontaneously, and continuously “inspired” as they wrote.⁵⁵

Accordingly, the Apostle seems to distinguish the gift of “**knowledge**” from a “**revelation**” or a “**prophecy**” in 1

Corinthians 14:6, suggesting that the latter two may be a more spontaneous, immediately given revelation, while "**knowledge**" may suggest a one time deposit of divine revelation and knowledge which numerous subsequent "words" or messages of divine wisdom and knowledge were based upon.⁵⁶

Along these lines, Erwin Lutzer writes:

[I]n some instances God endowed the [biblical] authors with ideas that they were allowed to write in their own words. This freedom allowed Paul, for example, to not only write with his own style, but to transition from doctrinal to personal matters. In his second letter to Timothy he could speak with authority about God's knowledge of us in eternity past (2 Timothy 1:9) and yet later say, "When you come bring the cloak which I left at Troas with Carpus, and the books, especially the parchments" (2 Timothy 4:13). God's ideas were written in Paul's style and in line with his interests and ability.⁵⁷

This is a fundamental statement regarding the nature of biblical revelation. While Dr. Lutzer suggests the *abiding knowledge* of apostolic revelation only occurred in "some instances," we would suggest this is the pervasive nature of all the NT epistles. After God supernaturally granted the Apostles divine knowledge of New Covenant doctrine through the types of supernatural revelation discussed in the next chapter, they could rather naturally use that knowledge to speak and write authoritatively on these subjects, adapting their knowledge to different circumstances, and weaving such supernatural knowledge amongst more natural knowledge.

The abiding, as opposed to the continuous or spontaneous nature of the apostolic gifts of divine knowledge and wisdom is reflected when the Apostle Paul describes Apostles as having "**the mind [noun] of Christ**" (1 Cor 2:16).⁵⁸ Several NT scholars would interpret the use of "**mind**" here as "a collection of thoughts and beliefs which provides the criteria" for what is true.⁵⁹ Christ's knowledge of divine things was given to the Apostles through the gifts of divine wisdom and knowledge as the basis of the NT revelation. Accordingly, Christ told the disciples that they too had His "mind" when He said, "**everything that I learned from My Father I have made known to you**" (John 15:15). It was out of this abiding divine knowledge they possessed that they were able to write divinely authoritative doctrine.

The fact that apostolic revelation consisted of an *abiding knowledge*, instead of a continuous "inspiration," challenges a great deal of modern thinking on this complex and controversial subject. So complex and controversial in fact, that, we will take up the topic of "inspiration" in chapters 8.8-8.11 of this book. Here we only

wish to use the abiding nature of the gifts of divine wisdom and knowledge to contrast them with the gift of prophecy.

For example, many speak of the apostolic gifts of divine knowledge and wisdom as intermittent like other spiritual gifts, that they had an "on" and then "off" characteristic and that "inspiration" kind of visited them periodically and perhaps only when they were writing a NT document. On the contrary, the apostolic gifts of divine knowledge and wisdom were continuous because the knowledge and wisdom they gave was the Apostle's permanent possession.

As noted above, we would suggest that the gift of prophecy operated on a more spontaneous, circumstantially driven nature, most often applying to specific needs of the moment. This distinction cannot be pressed too dogmatically as NT Prophets were also recipients of new extra-biblical doctrine authoritative and applicable to the universal Church (cf. Eph 2:20; 3:5). Nonetheless, the abiding and more general supernatural knowledge of NT Apostles has historically been distinguished from the more spontaneous and specific revelation of Prophets.

This may be the best explanation of why Paul considers the gift of Apostleship "**first**" and Christian "**Prophets second**" "**in the church**" (1 Cor 12:28), and always lists Apostles before NT Prophets (cf. Eph 2:20; 4:11). Both possessed absolutely authoritative revelation from God, but the revelation of Apostles was more important as it more often dictated what the universal Church was to obey and believe. Perhaps it was the more local and specific revelation of the Prophets that made them "**second**" in the Church.

Accordingly, Dr. Hodge wrote concerning Paul's mention of the gift of "**prophecy**" in Romans 12:6:

From these and numerous similar passages, it appears that the prophets in the Christian church were men who spoke under the immediate influence of the Spirit of God, and delivered some divine communication relating to doctrinal truths, to present duty, to future events, etc., as the case might be.

The point of distinction between them and the Apostles, considered as religious teachers, appears to have been that the inspiration of the Apostles was abiding, they were the infallible and authoritative messengers of Christ; whereas the inspiration of the Prophets was occasional and transient. The latter differed from the teachers, inasmuch as these were not necessarily inspired, but taught to others what they themselves had learned from the Scriptures, or from inspired men.⁶⁰

In general, then, we claim that the gifts of divine wisdom and knowledge resulted in an *abiding knowledge* of new extra-biblical divine revelation, providing the Apostles with a store of knowledge by which they could speak and write with divine authority.

E) Their Limitations

When the early Church leader Irenaeus claimed above that the Apostles possessed “perfect knowledge” he of course did not mean omniscience. What the gifts of divine wisdom and knowledge provided was perfect knowledge of the specific subjects God revealed. There are no errors in divine revelation—ever, for the simple fact that it is divine. However, through these gifts God did not reveal all He knows. Therefore the knowledge and wisdom given in these gifts applied to only the knowledge God desired someone to have. Accordingly, not even Jesus Christ knew the timing of End Time events, as the Father had not chosen to reveal this to Him or anyone else (cf. Matt 24:36). Likewise, the Apostle Paul could not remember whom he had baptized in Corinth (cf. 1 Cor 1:16).

This is not to say that God did not reveal historical, scientific, and cosmological matters in Scripture as well, but to simply say that those who possessed the gifts of divine wisdom and knowledge were not perfectly knowledgeable on all these subjects.⁶¹ In other words, a modern botanist is more knowledgeable about the pollination of daffodils than the Apostle Paul ever was. The Apostles possessed divine knowledge, but not omniscient knowledge.

Along these lines, the “Old Princeton” theologian B. B. Warfield (1851-1921) wrote:

A presumption may be held to lie also that [Paul] shared the ordinary opinions of his day in certain matters laying outside the scope of his teachings, as, for example, with reference to the form of the earth, or its relation to the sun; and it is not inconceivable that the form of his language, when incidentally adverted to such matters, might occasionally play into the hands of such a presumption.⁶²

In other words, it is possible that God allowed the Apostle Paul to have his scientific knowledge confined to what was taught in his day (e.g. Earth is flat, etc.), because it had no bearing on the spiritual knowledge the Apostle taught and wrote.

Nor did the gifts of divine wisdom and knowledge give a complete understanding of even biblical matters. One wonders, for example, what John’s Revelation received in the early 90’s would

have added to Peter and Paul's knowledge of End Time events, both of whom wrote and died some 30 years earlier.⁶³

Finally, the gifts of divine wisdom and knowledge certainly didn't guarantee perfect obedience to the revelation. The wisdom God gave Solomon was perfect, but his adherence to that very wisdom far from faithful. Likewise, while the Apostle Peter had received knowledge of the new extra-biblical revelation that God was accepting non-Jews into the New Covenant (cf. Acts 10:1-11:18), he did not consistently act accordingly (cf. Gal 2:11-14).⁶⁴

Extras & Endnotes

Gauging Your Grasp

- 1) What are several Scriptures that we claim refer to the gifts of divine wisdom and knowledge? Do you agree or disagree with this claim?
- 2) How do we describe the purpose of the gifts of divine wisdom and knowledge? Do you agree or disagree?
- 3) How do we distinguish between the gifts of divine wisdom and knowledge and prophecy? Do you agree or disagree?
- 4) What do we mean by *abiding* revelation? How does this concept differ from a common idea of "inspiration"?
- 5) What is our suggestion for distinguishing between the gift of divine wisdom and divine knowledge?

Publications & Particulars

¹ John Chrysostom, *Homily 32*; online at www.ccel.org.

² Distinguishing between the gift of "wisdom" and the gift of "knowledge" is difficult. As NT scholar Anthony Thiselton puts it, "There is no consensus whatever about any clear distinction between *logos sophias* and *logos gnosios*" (*The First Epistle to the Corinthians (NIGTC)* [Eerdmans, 2000], 941).

Not only in Greek, but also in English, the distinction is unclear as *Webster's* defines "wisdom" as: "accumulated philosophic or scientific learning: knowledge." (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/wisdom>). Accordingly, Leon Morris reports, "Some find no difference other than stylistic (Barrett, Conzelmann)" (*1 Corinthians* [Eerdmans, 1985], 167).

Nonetheless, it is obvious that the Apostle does intend to distinguish them. He did not write "to one is given the word of wisdom and knowledge" suggesting one gift, but rather, he described a "**word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge.**"

While it is not critical that we know how the Apostle distinguished these two gifts of miraculous communication, we will make our own suggestion. First, it is to be remembered that, "wisdom in the [OT Septuagint] tradition includes especially *moral* guidance for life" (Thiselton, 941). Accordingly, we discuss elsewhere the overwhelming moral nature of the idea of wisdom in the Bible (cf. section 3). This could be contrasted with amoral doctrine, or divine knowledge. This distinction between the *directional revelation* (i.e. moral commands to obey), and the *doctrinal revelation* (i.e. amoral doctrines to believe) has been demonstrated elsewhere to essentially make up the whole revelation of Scripture (cf.). In this sense, then, a gift of moral wisdom and a gift of doctrinal knowledge would be sufficient for all the divine revelation God would desire to give through the Apostles.

Accordingly, C. K. Barrett notes in his commentary:

Some have noted the essentially practical character of wisdom in the Old Testament, and the fact that knowledge may be speculative. A word of wisdom would then represent a practical discourse, consisting mainly of ethical instruction and exhortation [i.e. moral commands], and a word of knowledge an exposition of Christian truth [i.e. amoral doctrine]. (*The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (BNTC) [Hendrickson, 2000], 285)

This would seem to support our suggestion.

However, Dr. Barrett goes on to write, "But in this epistle knowledge is connected with practical matters (e.g. 8:10 f.), and some kinds at least of wisdom [cf. 1 cor 2] can be speculative enough" (Ibid.). On the first objection, Paul's discussion of the nature of idols in chapter 8 is doctrinal in nature. On the second objection, while we would agree that Paul uses "wisdom" in a doctrinal sense in chapter 2, perhaps he is rather forced in this way because of the Corinthian use of wisdom in a purely pagan speculative way. Nonetheless, both are miraculous gifts of divine revelation and will be considered rather synonymously hereafter.

³ Morris, 167.

⁴ *Super-supernaturalism* is our term for those primarily in *charismaticism* who believe that the miraculous gifts are operating today and that miracles in general are to be rather abundant and necessary. Regarding this movement see chapters 10.13-16.

⁵ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Zondervan, 1994), 1080.

⁶ Gordon Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Hendrickson, 1994), 167.

⁷ By modern *charismaticism* we are primarily referring to what is commonly labeled the "charismatic" movement that began with the Pentecostals in the early 1900's, spread into denominational churches in the 1960's and 70's, and has merged with what is referred to as the Third Wave churches today. Pentecostal churches include Assembly of God, Church of God, Open Bible, Apostolic, Foursquare Gospel, and Full Gospel. Third Wave churches include Vineyard and a variety of independent congregations.

We thank God for all He has done through the "charismatic" movement, and for the dear Christian brothers and sisters who would claim membership in it. However, throughout *Knowing Our God (KOG)* we refrain from referring to this movement as "charismatic," because this erroneously implies a uniqueness and even superiority in Christian grace (*charis*), and by further implication, a superior possession or experience of the Holy Spirit.

Surely no right-minded "charismatic" would desire to claim such a superiority over their Christian brothers and sisters, especially since they cannot demonstrate one. Biblically speaking, being "**led by the Spirit**," experiencing His power, and living "**not under law**" but by "**grace** [*charis*]" is most clearly manifested in the "**fruit of the Spirit**" which the Apostle Paul describes as "**love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control**" (Gal 5:4, 18, 22-3). "Charismatic" Christians in general are not superior in these virtues of love and holiness compared to other Christians, and these virtues are the real essence of Christian *charisma*, making all obedient Christians true "charismatics," not just a particular sect.

In fact, the greatest and most important uniqueness of *charismatic* churches over other authentic Christian churches is not their love or holiness, but rather an emphasis on, and practice of: 1) emotional worship, 2) speaking and/or praying in an incoherent tongue, 3) claims to direct divine revelation through spiritual gifts such as prophecy, and 4) claims to a greater abundance of miracles in general through the gifts of healing and miracle working.

Therefore, throughout *KOG* we use the terms *emotionalism* (see chapters 4.8-11), *glossaism* (Gr. glossa: "tongue," see Book 12: *The Truth About Tongues*), *prophetism* (see Book 9: *God's Prophets*), and *super-supernaturalism* (see chapters 10.14-16) to refer to these distinctives respectively, while recognizing that they may exist elsewhere as well. Accordingly, we believe this allows us to address the areas of concern we have regarding the movement, and avoid speaking critically of the movement as a whole, which has many good, although not unique, attributes as well.

Likewise, we refrain from referring to those Christians who would differ from "charismatics" as "non-charismatics," erroneously implying again that the latter is somehow lacking in grace. Rather, those who oppose the sometimes bizarre worship of *emotionalism*, the obscure utterances of *glossaism*, the extra-biblical revelations of *prophetism*, and the

miracle-a-minute mindset of *super-supernaturalism* are better labeled as *historicists*. This reflects the fact that *for at least 1600 years of Church history, the great majority belief and practice of God's people was opposed to all of the uniquenesses that the "charismatic" movement claims today.*

It is a historical fact that miraculous gifts such as healing, tongues, and prophecy ceased functioning in the church in the fourth century. Accordingly, the very few people since then who have promoted bizarre forms of worship, obscure utterances in prayer, claims to extra-biblical revelation, and miracle working abilities, were always thought to be deceived and dangerous, and not accepted as biblical Christians. What those in *charismaticism* also refuse to admit, or take seriously enough, is that the modern versions of the miraculous gifts being claimed do not match the attributes of their biblical counterparts. For a great deal of discussion on these matters see the books in this Volume II of *KOG*.

- ⁸ Fee, 592. Although, he, like Dr. Grudem, rejects this interpretation: "One need not doubt that the Holy Spirit speaks so to today's church, but it is unlikely that Paul had this in mind by this 'gift'" (ibid.). Dr. Fee simply defines it as "a 'spiritual utterance' of some revelatory kind" (593). Which doesn't seem all that different from the charismatic view he rejects.
- ⁹ Michael Green, *The Message of Matthew* (Intervarsity, 2000)
- ¹⁰ For a much fuller discussion of the nature of biblical wisdom see section 14?
- ¹¹ Origen, *De principiis*, Preface, 3; online at www.ccel.org.
- ¹² Thiselton, 941-2.
- ¹³ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 23-25; online at <http://www.newadvent.org/summa>.
- ¹⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *1 Corinthians*, para. 728; online at <http://www.aquinas.avemaria.edu/Aquinas-Corinthians.pdf>
- ¹⁵ Ibid., para. 764.
- ¹⁶ John Calvin, *Calvin's Bible Commentaries*, 1 Cor 12:8; online at www.ccel.org.
- ¹⁷ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the New Testament*, Electronic Edition STEP Files CD-ROM (Findex.Com, 1999), 1 Cor 12:8
- ¹⁸ Charles Hodge, *Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1 Cor 12:8; online at www.ccel.org.
- ¹⁹ William Barclay, *Daily Study Bible*, CD-ROM (Liguori Publications, 1996), *1 Corinthians*, 109.
- ²⁰ D. A. Carson, *Showing the Spirit: A Theological Exposition of 1 Corinthians 12-14* (Baker, 1987), 38.

- ²¹ John MacArthur, *MacArthur's New Testament Commentary*, Electronic Edition STEP Files CD-ROM (Parsons Technology, 1997), 1 Cor 12:8.
- ²² Donald Gee, *Concerning Spiritual Gifts*, (Gospel Publishing House, 1972; Arnold Bittlinger, *Gifts and Ministries* (Eerdmans, 1973).
- ²³ Grudem, 1080. See his support of this view at 1080-82.
- ²⁴ For a discussion of the distinction between these gifts see endnote above.
- ²⁵ For a discussion of *miracle faith* see chapter 6.8
- ²⁶ For further discussion of the gift of tongues see Book 12: *The Truth About Tongues*.
- ²⁷ Hodge, 1 Cor 12:7. However, we are not sure how Dr. Hodge reconciled this observation with his earlier one that the gift of knowledge, "is probably to be understood the gift which belonged to teachers." (Ibid.)
- ²⁸ Our claim that this whole section in 1 Corinthians regarding divine revelation applies only to the revelatory Apostles is further defended against *mega mystical* claims in section 14.13.E.
- ²⁹ Accordingly, Dr. Fee writes, "Indeed, Paul twice appeals to his own gift of "knowledge" in this letter as evidence that God is at work in his ministry (6:6; 11:6) (Presence, 339).
- ³⁰ Accordingly, Cornelius Van Til wrote:

The inspiration of Christ is univocal in character because he was himself divine. Yet we must not off -hand identify Christ's human consciousness with his divine consciousness. He tells us that the words he speaks have been received, John 14:10, 24. This accords with his acceptance of human nature, and that in its weakened condition. He grew in wisdom, through the reading of Scripture, etc. (An Introduction to Systematic Theology [Unpublished syllabus, 1955], 161

- ³¹ Albert Barnes saw a reference to a revelation of divine wisdom in Job 32:7-9:

I thought, 'Age should speak; advanced years should teach wisdom.' But it is the spirit in a man, the breath of the Almighty, that gives him understanding. It is not only the old who are wise, not only the aged who understand what is right.

Dr. Barnes commented:

This evidently refers to a spirit imparted from above; a spirit from the Almighty. The parallelism seems to require this, for it responds to the phrase "the inspiration of the Almighty" in the other hemistich. The Hebrew expression here also seems to require this interpretation. It is, *רוח ה' הוא* *ruach hu'*, the Spirit itself; meaning the very Spirit that gives wisdom, or the Spirit of inspiration. . . .

All true wisdom, is the sentiment, is from above; and where the inspiration of the Almighty is, no matter whether with the aged or the young, there is understanding. Elihu undoubtedly means to say, that

though he was much younger than they were, and though, according to the common estimate in which the aged and the young were held, he might be supposed to have much less acquaintance with the subjects under consideration, yet, as all true wisdom came from above, he might be qualified to speak.

The word "spirit" here, therefore, refers to the spirit which God gives; and the passage is a proof that it was an early opinion that certain men were under the teachings of divine inspiration. The Chaldee renders it רוח נבואה, a spirit of prophecy (Job 32:8).

However, see C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Electronic Edition STEP Files CD-ROM (Findex.com, 2000) for a different view

- ³² Polycarp, *Epistle to the Philippians*, 3:1-2; online at www.ccel.org.
- ³³ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 87; online at www.ccel.org.
- ³⁴ Tertullian, *Against Marcion*, V:8; online at www.ccel.org.
- ³⁵ M. F. Wiles, "Theodore of Mopsuestia as Representative of the Antiochene School," *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, P. R Ackroyd and C. F. Evans, 2 Vols. (Cambridge Press, 1970), 495.
- ³⁶ Hilary of Poitiers, *Trinity*, viii:30; online at www.ccel.org.
- ³⁷ Jonathan Edwards, *Charity and its Fruits*, 157; online at www.graphbooks.org/chanditfrjed.html
- ³⁸ Merrill F. Unger, *NT Teaching on Tongues* (Kregel, 1971), 83, 94.
- ³⁹ Some see the gifts as revelatory (e.g., Robert L. Thomas, *Understanding Spiritual Gifts* [Kregel, 1998], 37; Morris, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians* (TNTC) [Eerdmans, 1958], 171; Thiselton, 938-944.
- ⁴⁰ For further discussion on the nature of supernatural knowledge see section 2.3.C.1.
- ⁴¹ Therefore, we would not agree with the popular Christian author Philip Yancey who writes, "As I read the Temptation story it occurs to me that, in the absence of eyewitnesses, all details must have come from Jesus himself." (*The Jesus I Never Knew* [Zondervan, 1995], 70)
- ⁴² Grudem, 1080.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, 1081.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁵ For further discussion on the fake nature of the phenomenon of tongues in the Corinthian congregation see esp. chapter 12.7.
- ⁴⁶ Green, 229, 230.
- ⁴⁷ Clairvoyancy is further discussed at section 9.12.A.
- ⁴⁸ Hodge, 1 Cor 12:8.

-
- ⁴⁹ For further discussion concerning who these promises of divine revelation in John apply to see chapter 14.13.
- ⁵⁰ Tertullian, *Against Marcion*, V:8.
- ⁵¹ Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, 4:21; quoted in Thiselton, 940.
- ⁵² Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, III.1.1; online at www.ccel.org.
- ⁵³ Chrysostom, *Homilies on 1 Corinthians*, 29:1; online at www.ccel.org.
- ⁵⁴ For discussion of the claim that the NT gift of prophecy is synonymous with being a NT Prophet, contrary to *charismaticism*, see section 9.4.B
- ⁵⁵ Because these gifts involved the divine knowledge itself which could potentially be withheld, we disagree with Dr. Barrett who writes:
 The gift is “instructive discourse” and “It is the discourse, not the wisdom or the knowledge behind it, that is the spiritual gift, for it is this that is of direct service to the church (Schlatter). (284-5)
 It is true that these gifts certainly involved an expression of this revelation and not just its possession, as Paul refers to them as “**the word** [*logos*: “expression”] **of wisdom through the Spirit**” and “**the word** [*logos*: “expression”] **of knowledge according to the same Spirit**” (1 Cor 12:8 NASB). However, Paul’s emphasis on the expression of divine knowledge in 1 Corinthians 12 may be because he is specifically dealing with the occurrence of supposedly Spirit-inspired utterances in the Corinthian congregation (cf. v. 3)
- ⁵⁶ For further discussion on the distinction between the gifts of prophecy and Apostleship see section 9.4.B.
- ⁵⁷ Erwin Lutzer, *Seven Convincing Miracles* (Moody, 1999), 22-3.
- ⁵⁸ In our opinion, we are not able to find very many good commentators on this passage. Most modern ones claim that 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 refers to some revelation or illumination given to all Christians. We argue against this and present evidence that the Apostle is defending his apostleship in this passage and is primarily only referring to the supernatural revelation of Apostles (see section 14.13.E).
 There is an absence of good discussions on specifically 1 Corinthians 2:16 as well. Most modern commentators simply don’t discuss it at length. Dr. MacArthur applies it to the idea of the illumination of the believer to understand the Scriptures, a teaching we have altogether argued against elsewhere (see chapter 3.5). An older commentator like Dr. Barnes (1798–1870) thought “**the mind of Christ**” refers to His “views, feelings, and temper [character].”
 The only commentator we can find who, in our opinion, offers a substantial and accurate interpretation of 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 is Charles Hodge who accordingly interpreted v. 6 as “The Lord had revealed certain doctrines” to the Apostles. Accordingly, we have written:
 Finally, Paul says, “**we have the mind of Christ**” (v. 16). Was he including the Corinthian Christians in general in this statement? Not likely when a few verses later he tells them, “**Brothers, I could not**

address you as spiritual, but as worldly—mere infants in Christ” (3:1). And if Paul did not mean to include the Corinthian Christians in such a claim, then no Christian today should either. It was the Apostles who possessed **“the mind of Christ,”** the very thing He had uniquely promised them in John 14:25-26 and 16:12-15 as discussed above, and which gave them their superior ability and authority to represent Christ through their writings in Scripture (14.13.E)

⁵⁹ Thiselton approvingly quotes this as the view of Paul Jewett and Adolf Schlatter. (275)

⁶⁰ Charles Hodge, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, Electronic Edition STEP Files (Findex.com, 2003), Rom 12:6.

⁶¹ Because the gifts of divine wisdom and knowledge only applied to biblical matters we would disagree with Augustine, of whom Jack Rogers writes:

When Felix the Manichean claimed that the Holy Spirit had revealed to Manicheus the orbits of the heavenly bodies, Augustine replied that God desired us to become Christians, not astronomers. Such talk, Augustine said, takes up much of our valuable time and thus distracts our attention from more wholesome matters. Although our authors knew the truth about the shape of the heavens, the Spirit of God who spoke by them did not intend to teach men these things, in no way profitable for salvation. (Jack Rogers, “The Church Doctrine of Biblical Authority” in *Biblical Authority*, Jack Rogers ed. [Word, 1977], 21-23)

⁶² B. B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* (Presbyterian and Reformed, 1948), 196-97.

⁶³ In fact, we will suggest in section 3.23.? that when Paul claims in 1 Corinthians 13:9 that, **“we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when [to teleion: “the completed thing”] comes, the imperfect [knowledge that even Apostles had at the time] disappears,”** because there was more NT revelation to come.

⁶⁴ The “charismatic” teacher Jack Deere unfortunately takes a shot at denigrating the authority of the Apostles with the example of Peter’s hypocrisy in Antioch. Mr. Deere’s purpose, which is unfortunately characteristic of *charismaticism*, is to water down the gift of Apostleship in the Bible so that a lesser gift or Apostles can be recognized today. He writes:

There is a tendency among some Protestant writers to almost deify the Apostles. Gross maintains that an Apostle “taught nothing contradictory to the Word of God (Galatians 1:8, 9).” But Peter did teach something contrary to the Word. Paul said that when Peter came to Antioch, his example led a number of people into hypocrisy. This was certainly a form of teaching, and Paul had to oppose it. I do not believe the Apostles ever made a mistake writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, but they did not live under constant inspiration of the Holy Spirit. As Peter's example shows, they were

capable of significant sin, just like any other believer in the church.
(*Surprised by the Power of the Spirit* [Zondervan, 1993], 249)

Mr. Deere makes the mistake of equating a person's teaching, with the sin or mistakes they make. No doubt if Peter would have been asked on the occasion what the truth was, he would have infallibly communicated the truth. And Mr. Deere's admission that the Apostles were only infallible while "under inspiration" is not helpful as neither we nor those in the first century could do when this was. Peter does nothing here to refute the idea that the *teaching* of the Apostles was infallible.

In the end, we think Mr. Deere is taking a cheap shot at the biblical Apostles in order to justify his belief that revelatory and miracle working Apostles can exist today, without infallible authority or teaching, which quite conveniently covers up the gross sin and heresy that many "apostles" in *charismaticism* are guilty of. Mr. Deere should be exposing such "false apostles" instead of trying to justify them. Anyone who is at all attracted to Mr. Deere's point of view should read what we have quoted from Abraham Kuyper in section ? which does a great deal more justice to the Word of God concerning the Apostles than contemporary *charismaticism*.