



Interpreting Prophecy //
Distinguishing Between Spirits // Tongues

Interpreting/evaluating prophetic words

- We don't naively/gullibly embrace every word as truth
- The solution to abuse isn't disuse, but wise correction
- They must be *inline* with Scripture and the teachings/traditions of the Apostles (2 Thes. 2:15)
- They must edify, comfort, console, and encourage (1 Cor. 14:3)

Interpreting/evaluating prophetic words

- If predictive, have they come to pass as prophesied?
- Are they delivered in love? (1 Cor. 13)
- Delivered in humility: is the speaker willing to be tested and receive correction?
- Personal introspection (Acts 20–21)

The gift of *distinguishing between spirits*

- The Spirit-empowered ability to recognize the work of the Holy Spirit, verses the work of another (demonic) spirit, or even the work of the human spirit.

1 John 4:1 (ESV)

"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God..."

Acts 2:4,8-11 (ESV)

"And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance... (8)'And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? (9)Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, (10)Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, (11)both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.'"

1 Corinthians 14:2 (ESV)

"For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit."

Ephesians 3:6 (ESV)

"This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel."

1 Corinthians 14:23 (ESV)

"If, therefore, the whole church comes together and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are out of your minds?"

Characteristics of the Gift of Tongues

- Manifests as different kinds/‘species’: human, angelic(?), divine
 - Paul’s context (for the local church): supernaturally inspired divine language meant for praise and thanksgiving and worship
- Benefits the church corporately only if there is an interpretation
 - ...otherwise, benefit is retained individually. Speaker urged to remain quiet.

1 Corinthians 14:27–28 (ESV)

"If any speak in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn, and let someone interpret. (28) But if there is no one to interpret, let each of them keep silent in church and speak to himself and to God."

1 Corinthians 14:4–5 (ESV)

"The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church. (5) Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up."

Romans 15:1–2 (ESV)

"We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. (2) Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up."

1 Corinthians 14:18–19 (ESV)

"I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. (19) Nevertheless, in church I would rather speak five words with my mind in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue."