

The New Testament Gift of Prophecy

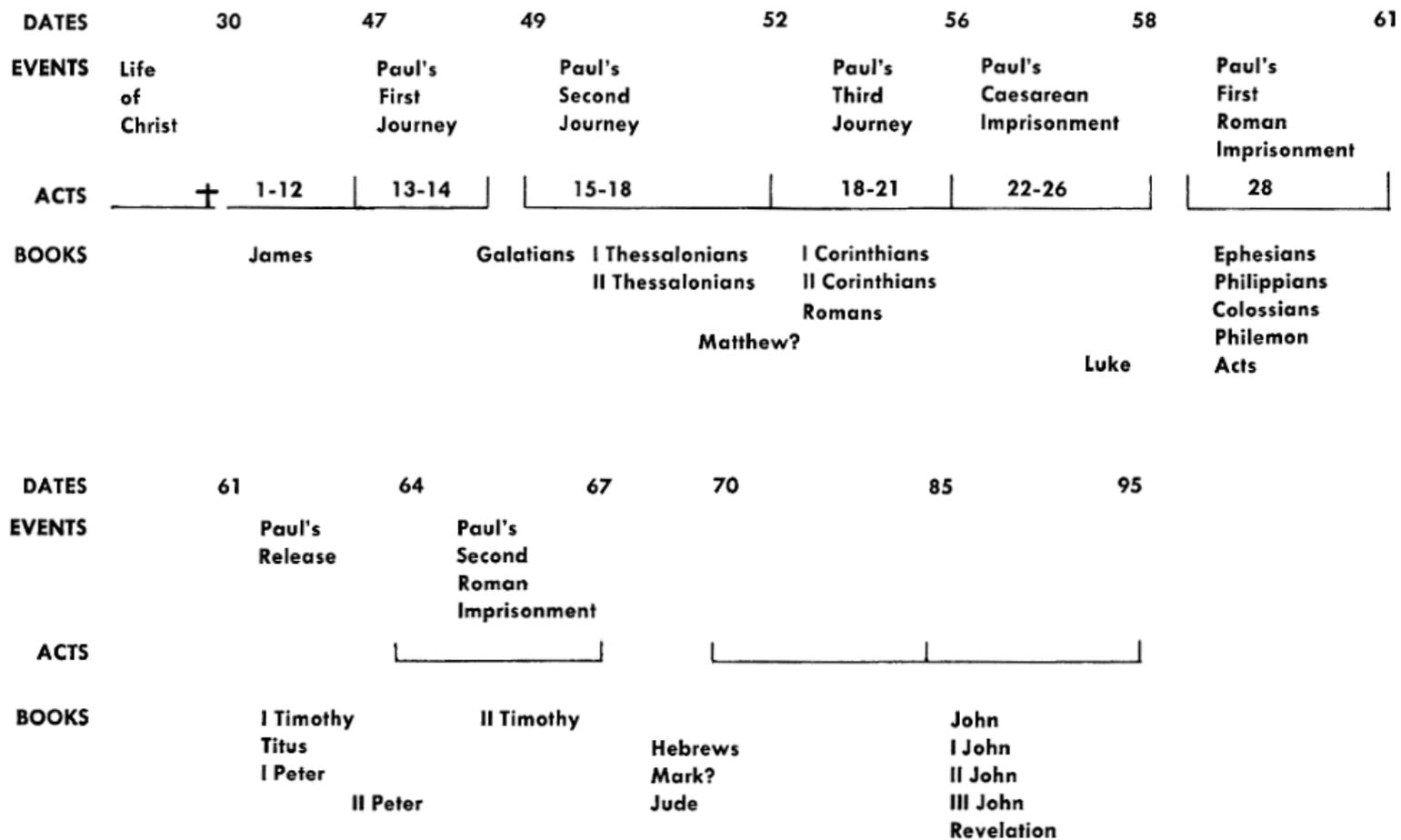
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1. The gift of prophecy to the church was an NT gift of the Holy Spirit, enabling some believers to contribute to the church in that way – **providing either predictive (predicting an event, etc.) or declarative (speaking the Word of the Lord) revelation from God** in the context of church ministry (e.g. Rom. 12:6, 1 Cor. 12:10).
2. Those with this gift, along with the gift of the apostleship, provided a foundation for the church. **Following the first century of the church, the foundation (apostle and prophet) and revelation gifts (tongues, knowledge) ceased functioning** (e.g. Eph. 2:20, 3:5, 1 Cor. 3:10, 12:28).
3. **Whatever a prophet said was relevant only if it corresponded completely with OT and apostolic doctrine** – what was already recorded through inspired Scripture or what the apostles themselves were teaching (e.g. Acts 2:42, 17:11, 1 Cor. 14:29, 1 Jn. 4:1).
4. The gift of prophecy (and other ‘revelatory’ type spiritual gifts, such as tongues speaking, knowledge, etc.) were **both partial and temporary** and would “pass away” (1 Cor. 13:8-10).
5. **In the epistles, you will find a decreasing emphasis on and practice of the prophetic gift and an increased emphasis on the written Scripture as the Word of God for churches.** This occurred as the written NT Scripture became more available to more of the churches. The gift of prophecy made the transition from no NT Scripture to complete NT Scripture possible, in an adequate but impartial way. To make this observation, you should carefully compare the content, emphasis and teaching of early epistles such as Romans, Thessalonians, and Corinthians with subsequent epistles, such as Timothy, Peter, Hebrews, John, and Jude. This observation answers in part the question of why would some NT epistles give an instruction to the early church that may also be irrelevant for the church to practice today [see the NT books timeline chart provided].

The earlier books from a historical, chronological order speak more about the gift of prophecy as something being practiced in the churches, while the later epistles give less indication of this. Instead, the later epistles give increased attention to refuting the increasing problem of false prophets (e.g. 2 Pet., Jude, 2 John, and many specific verses), to emphasizing the reading, study, preaching and teaching of the recorded NT Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16, 4:1-4, 4:13, 2 Pet. 1:20-21, etc.), and to directing attention to the remaining prophecy of the remaining apostles, particularly Peter and John

Even though the gift of prophecy as a form of giving revelation from God was indeed a spiritual gift functioning early in the start of the inaugural church and included in the list of gifts at that time, other Scripture teaching indicates that it would eventually cease as the recorded Word of God was completed and was more available. So in conclusion, **to teach that prophecy (and other revelatory or sign gifts, such as tongues speaking, knowledge, and apostleship are functioning gifts in the church today are contrary to NT Scripture, erroneous, misleading, harmful and problematic - no matter how well intended.**



1 This chart is copied from Robert G. Gromacki, *New Testament Survey* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1974), 48.