14 - Revelation

1 Cor. 12:8

For to one is given through the spirit a message of wisdom, and to another a message of knowledge by means of the same spirit,

Now begins the listing of the nine manifestations of the spirit. The first two mentioned are “a message of wisdom” and “a message of knowledge”. This is revelation. Here are good definitions of each from “The Gift of Holy Spirit” book.

“A message of knowledge is God or the Lord Jesus Christ providing you information, insight, and understanding about something. “

“A message of wisdom is God or the Lord Jesus Christ providing to you direction, or how to apply the knowledge you have about something.”

Diagram

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Both manifestations are a ‘message” (a little bit) of information from God, obviously not all He has. (That might turn us into a puddle!) The internet works the same way. We get a screenful of info at a time, not everything the internet has. For example, when Joseph explained Pharaoh’s dream, he got the piece of info he shared with Pharoah from God via a message of knowledge and wisdom.

Gen. 41:25-27, 33-34

Joseph said to Pharaoh, “The dream of Pharaoh is one; what God is about to do he has declared to Pharaoh.

The seven good cows are seven years and the seven good heads of grain are seven years; the dream is one.

The seven thin and ugly cows that came up after them are seven years, and likewise the seven empty heads of grain scorched by the east wind; there will be seven years of famine.

“So now let Pharaoh look for a discerning and wise man, and set him over the land of Egypt.

Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint overseers over the land and collect one-fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years.

The message of knowledge was, “There’s seven plenteous and seven famine years coming.” The message of wisdom was, “Pick a smart guy to store 20% of the plenty to cover the famine.” There are many examples of this in scripture including scripture itself! Recall…

2 Tim 3:16

All Scripture is God-breathed and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness,

God gave the writers of scripture the info they wrote. How? By messages of knowledge and wisdom. God “breathed” his life into the info which still “breathes” life into us, right?

Both revelation manifestations are not the transmittal of natural knowledge. There are some folks who are very smart. They know all kinds of things. Some are well educated, and some are just knowledge super-geeks. These abilities are not manifestations of the spirit. Neither is the ability of some who know how to accomplish difficult feats in engineering, business or science. This is also not necessarily revelation based. Joseph didn’t study advanced agrarian business prediction practices in the Egyptian prison library. God told him. These are not manifestations of study or smarts, but of the spirit.

Methods of Revelation

Sometimes God tells us what’s going on now and at times what will happen in the future. Sometimes spiritual information is communicated via a vision, or by sound, by a dream, or by another sensation. Sometimes it’s a “still small voice” or just a “knowing”. Once I “knew” something awful was going to happen to me and a nauseating feeling followed. The reason I knew it was a message of knowledge from God was because bad thoughts with nausea never happened to me before and I “just knew” it was true. This is the challenge with learning the manifestations of the spirit. There are biblical guidelines but it’s also individually subjective. God works with each of us differently. Why is that? Because each of us is different! And God loves each of us! For instance, to one of us God will give nausea, while to another He will give a vision of a stop sign. While to another He will say, “Stop!” in their spiritual ears. What’s the message? “Stop doing what you’re doing and pay attention if you want to avoid+ a looming threat and want the next steps for victory.” God can and does communicate the same message differently to each of us.

Psychologists say that each person is oriented differently. Some are visually oriented while some are acute to audible stimulation primarily. Some others are ‘foodies’ and taste and smell are dominant for them. Some are tactile (touch) sensitive while some are overwhelmingly intellectually wired. We are all different and that explains why revelation comes in so many ways. Consider this:

Eph. 4:24 KJV

And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

In a figurative sense, the spirit we receive at salvation is called “the new man”. Is it really a “new man”? No, it’s spirit. Once again God uses physical analogies to help explain spiritual truths. God’s spirit within us is like a new person within. Picture eyes behind your eyes, ears behind your ears, Christ’s gut behind your gut. You say, “What’s that?” You know what that is – you’ve had that ‘gut feeling’ about something that turned out to be correct, despite evidence to the contrary, right? Where did you get that ‘feeling’? The same place I got my nausea, the Boss – Jesus! It was a feeling, a thought out of nowhere that turned out to be true. Are you that good a guesser? That smart? Is your vision so good you can see the future? No, that was MoK or MoW (Message of Knowledge or Message of Wisdom).

Usually visually oriented people see stuff. Audible people hear stuff. The tactiles feel stuff. Brainiacs think stuff. The ‘how’ of revelation is not so important as just hearing from the Boss. We shouldn’t get hung up on the method, just the message.

The Joy of Life is the Journey with God

Now, when some people find out that they can hear from God, they can get crazy. They want God to tell them the secret six numbers for the lottery so they can win a million dollars and be a millionaire. Let me tell you another secret. It won’t happen. Why not? Let me ask you, does God know the numbers? Sure. Can God tell us? Of course. Will He? No, it would probably be bad for you. Why? Let me use myself as an example. The house we live in is supposedly worth over a million dollars today, so technically, we’re millionaires. Did I win the lottery? No. You must buy a ticket to win and I’ve never done that. Why not? Two reasons - no revelation and it’s not wise. I trusted God’s direction on my life years ago and bought the house for a LOT less and struggled by trusting God through good and bad times to pay it off in 20 years. In the process, I learned a lot about God’s character (and mine too). His faithfulness never wavered over that time. If I had won the lottery and gotten a million dollars and used it to buy a house, I would never have had to trust God and gotten to experience His goodness and spiritually grown. That experience is worth WAY more than a million dollars! If God told someone the lottery numbers, they would get a million dollars and spend it and probably rarely ask God for guidance. Why would they? They are millionaires! They can chart their own course! Wrong! Once again, God made the universe, the earth, and man to fellowship with Him. That means He’ll help us get a million-dollar house with Him - through economic downturns, stock market dips, family traumas, health crises, etc. – providing you want it. He wants to partner with us every day through it all. Lottery winners throw money at problems and rarely trust God. Easy come – easy go! The joy of life is the journey with God and results always follow.

So, someone says, “Steve you’ve a millionaire, give me some money!” I answer, “Get in line! The feds, the state, the county and the city are already there, and so are the utilities, grocery, insurances, and others plus our support for our favorite works of God. Then there are the kids and grandkids… . By the way, when you get in line, I won’t be able to see you because the line is loooong! And, just because our house is worth over a million doesn’t mean I have over a million. I don’t. Go ask God for one of His cattle on a thousand hills! And if it’s like it was with me, prepare to have to chase, rope, corral, feed, breed, and pasture that beast. God will help you with that. He likes to fellowship with us all the way from chasing the cattle to enjoying it. It’s the adventure of a lifetime. He’ll give you guidance on that, not the lottery. Here's some wisdom on the lottery - save the $10 for a ticket and put it toward horseshoes for your ‘cattle chaser!’”

Now, some Christians doubt that revelation from God is real because they ask God for the winning lottery numbers and He doesn’t answer. Why not?

1 John 5:14,15

And this is the confidence that we have in his presence: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.

And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask according to his will—then we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.

If we ask for things outside of God’s will, He still hears us but the answer is usually silence. What if a ten your old asked their dad for a car? What would the dad do? Probably change the subject or show them their legs won’t reach the pedals. One thing to realize about revelation is that it’s different from speaking in tongues in God’s energizing. In speaking in tongues, interpretation, and prophesy, God’s energizing is automatic – you activate and He energizes. You knock, He opens. Not so with the rest of the manifestations. Why?

1 Cor. 12: 6

And there are energizings being distributed to people, but it is the same God who energizes all of them in all people.

Tongues, interpretation and prophecy are the ‘starting’ manifestations, in a manner of speaking. They get us familiar with activating and experiencing the energizing of the spirit. They are the ‘tricycle’ of the spirit, leading to the advanced, balance-dependent ‘bicycle’.

Just because we ask for revelation doesn’t guarantee that God will energize it. Why not? As we discussed, sometimes…

Jas. 4:3

You ask and yet do not receive because you ask with wrong motives, so that you can spend it on your pleasures.

God would rather us trust Him to get stuff than just be a vending machine that dispenses our desires. He wants a relationship with us not just be a function in our lives. He wants to walk with us to victory, not just give us the victory and then we run around like we did it ourselves and don’t need Him anymore.

Spirit Verses the Flesh

Now some folks want MoK and MoW so badly, it almost as if they want to deny their senses, body, and soul, to only get revelation…like this:

It’s as if they want to float in dark silence to deny sense knowledge to interfere with the revelation they’re waiting for. Sound silly? It’s sort of like what the monks did when they retreated from the world into a monastery to achieve peace and communion with God. Some even whipped themselves, trying to conquer their flesh to achieve holiness. Others chose different punishments attempting to master their sin nature within. Were they successful? No. Why not? Because there’s nothing wrong with our human senses. Who gave them to us? God. Who gave us our minds and bodies? God also. The problem is the misuse of our senses, mind and bodies, not the things themselves. God made the sky in all its wonderous beauty in the day and its marvelous spectacle at night. He also made the sound of the wind, the chirping of birds and the roar of the waves. He created the patter of rain, the chill of snow and the smell of the ocean air. As Genesis said about His creation, “It was very good”. God made these things for man to enjoy in, with, and for his body. God made our bodies, souls, AND spirit. Even though our bodies and souls were broken by original sin (with dozens of generations of sin and consequences piled on), they are still gifts from God and the primary way Adam was designed to live. Did Adam live in a sensory deprivation tank? Did Jesus? Did Paul live in a monastery? No, and neither should we.

If you carefully read about the lives of the most spiritual people of all time in the Bible, you will notice that they spent the vast majority of their time wisely utilizing their body and soul and also getting revelation occasionally. For instance, the revelation Joseph got was astounding, but it wasn’t an everyday thing. Same with Elijah, Joshua, David, and the rest. The point is this:

95%+ of the knowledge we operate in is sense knowledge – 5% is spiritual.

Prov. 4:7

Wisdom is the principal thing, so get Wisdom; and with all your purchases, purchase understanding.

In Proverbs we learn that knowledge, wisdom and understanding are the principal things in everyday life, not faith. I’m NOT saying there’s anything wrong with godly faith, it’s just not the principal thing. Consider this - some people want to live without any common sense and ‘trust’ that God will bail them out of their lack of responsible use of sense knowledge because the Bible says that they are “more than conquerors”. Does God bail them out? From my experience, I’ve seen God bail out lots of people after they are born again, but soon after, it they don’t start living wisely, He lets then get what they deserve – consequences. Why? Because God gave us a head to use for more than a hat rack. He wants us to get knowledge, think, and then use it wisely. This is how we learn to make a living, cooperate with others, get married, raise a family, etc. Sure, there’s revelation involved to be successful – Bible principals and occasional MoK and WoK - but most of it is study, learning from others and common sense. If you’re not using what God gave you (your mind), why would He give you more? God expects us to use what He’s given us – physically and spiritually. Here’s the point:

Physical knowledge and wisdom are a necessity, routine and valuable.

MoK and WoK are rare and even more valuable.

God doesn’t give us constant revelation via the spirit because we are already getting constant information from our bodies and souls already. What do I mean? We have an inner man AND an outer man too! This ‘outer man’ is also God’s (and our parent’s) gift to us. We collect info constantly from our eyes, ears, touch, etc. and process it in our minds. The knowledge and wisdom we receive this way is our primary base for our body and soul living. God usually gives spiritual knowledge when natural knowledge and ability are not enough. This idea is contrary to some ideas of “super-spirituality”. Some Christians get led away to becoming so heavenly minded that they become no earthly good!

When some Christians talk, it sounds like they get 95% revelation not 5%! They give off the impression that God is their BFF! We’ll, maybe they are getting more revelation than you or me … at that time. When you search the scriptures, you will see times when revelation was plentiful in certain situations and then times when it was not. If it’s true that someone is getting more revelation than me, then I ask God, “What’s up?” Remember, revelation comes from my activation and God’s energizing. If I’m not activating, then God’s won’t be energizing. If I am activating (asking God to keep me informed, keeping my mind tuned into His channel by prayer, and scripture study) and He’s not energizing, then it’s out of my hands. I can’t originate revelation. Well, I guess I can fake it and say, “God told me…”, but that’s a manifestation of Steve, not *pneuma hagion*. Regrettably, there’s some of that type of ‘manifesting’ occasionally, but that’s neither genuine or what God, or we want.

MoK and MoW are rarely earth-shattering. Are sensations from your leg earth-shattering? Usually not, unless they’re bone shattering! Revelation is as shocking as Boone jumping into the screen on fellowship night. It’s surprising but not unexpected. The same is true with most revelations.

Do you know how to find out if something is a revelation if you don’t know?

#1. Ask the Boss. He knows.

#2. 1 Thess 5:21

but test everything and hold on firmly to what is good.

Think about it. Is the potential revelation a new thought, idea, sensation, sound, etc.? (That means you already have a handle on what is normal in your mind and what isn’t.) Does it line up with scripture? (This is how I know my thoughts of strangling my legislators are not from God because commandment #5 says “Do not kill.” Just kidding!) Is it beneficial? Does it glorify God and build up the body of Christ? Would it be the kind of thing Jesus would say or do?

#3. If the answer is “Yes” to the above, then do (act on) the possible revelation. You’ll know soon if it is or not. Genuine revelation comes to pass – other stuff doesn’t. And by the way, the verse above doesn’t ask you to tell anyone while you’re testing it. If it is revelation, you can tell them later. If it’s not, it’s easy to say, “Well I learned one more thing of what it’s not!” to yourself and chalk it up to learning which is what ALL of us do as we learn just how God communicates with us individually.

#4. Ask a trusted elder if you still have questions. God’s big enough to confirm or refute possible revelation by a counselor or counselors.

Prov. 15:22 KJV

Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.

Keep in mind, no matter what anyone else says, we are responsible for our actions based upon our thoughts, inspirations and or possible revelations. If it’s God’s leading, it will work out as He says. And if not, then we’ve learned more for next time. Some of the greatest healers failed dozens of times before healing others. But they kept at it until God was able to teach them. Did you know that Babe Ruth hit more homeruns than anyone else for decades. But… he also held the record for striking out more than anyone else, too! Tt’s how you start to hit a homerun. You look for the ball and swing the bat! That’s also how we get revelation. We look to God expectantly and do what he says. We swing the bat!

Batter up!