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# Words of Truth

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## I Thessalonians 5:19-20

By: Brian A. Yeager

*“Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings”* (I Thessalonians 5:19-20). In this article we are going to study two passages of Scripture that pertain to spiritual gifts. In the first century, after a person was baptized into Christ, they received the gift of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of the Apostles’ hands (Acts 8:5-24). To get a mental image of what happened, notice this: *“And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve”* (Acts 19:1-7).

Speaking in tongues and prophesying were not the only gifts Christians received through the Holy Spirit of God in the first century. We find more information in what Paul wrote to the church in Corinth: *“Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will”* (I Corinthians 12:3-11). We don’t see these things among Christians today because they were temporary gifts (I Corinthians 12:28-13:13 and Ephesians 4:7-16).

With all of that information in mind, let’s consider what it meant to not quench the Spirit. As you might imagine, the word “quench” means what you likely think it means. The Greek word “σβέννυμι” translated quench is defined like this: “1) to extinguish, quench; 1a) of fire or

things on fire; 1a1) to be quenched, to go out; 1b) metaphorically to quench, to suppress, stifle; 1b1) of divine influence” (Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon; Strong’s # 4570). You will find that Greek word translated in the KJV as “quench” (Matthew 12:20, Ephesians 6:16), “gone out” (Matthew 25:8), and “quenched” (Mark 9:44; 9:46; 9:48 and Hebrews 11:34).

In the age of spiritual gifts a person could extinguish the Holy Spirit. How is that? Well, a person was not possessed by the Holy Spirit and overtaken against his or her freewill. In a context dealing with spiritual gifts, we see that Christians had control over the usage of those abilities (I Corinthians 14:1-40). In that context, this was said about the prophets: *“And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets... If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord”* (I Corinthians 14:32; 14:37). Having said that, there is another application too. One that fits better into this context. Let’s get into that now as we think about the word despise.

There is no need to define “despise.” If you do the word study, you’ll see the translation is accurate and the word is clear (Strong’s # 1848). The question begs asking, why would someone despise prophesyings? It is not that “prophesyings” in some way is a mistranslation. The Greek word [προφητεία] (Strong’s # 4394) is most often translated “prophecy”, “prophecies”, or “prophesying” (Matthew 13:14, Romans 12:6, I Corinthians 12:10, I Corinthians 13:2, I Corinthians 13:8, I Corinthians 14:6, I Corinthians 14:22, I Timothy 1:18, I Timothy 4:14, II Peter 1:20-21, Revelation 1:3, Revelation 11:6, Revelation 19:10, Revelation 22:7, Revelation 22:10, and Revelation 22:18-19). Could it be that people despise prophecies because they don’t like the message?

Do you recall this statement from chapter four of this letter: *“He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit”* (I Thessalonians 4:8)? That connects both of the verses we are talking about in this study. It is cautionary. It is easy for someone to reject the words of a prophet when they just think of them as words of a man. It gets much more difficult to reject those words when a person is reminded that the prophet is actually speaking God’s word. That is exactly what prophets did. Notice: *“The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue... And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus. And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles”* (II Samuel 23:2 and Acts 21:10-11).

If you will recall the account of Stephen’s teaching and death (Acts 6:8-7:60), that gives us the image of the combined points in this article. Specifically, notice this: *“Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye”* (Acts 7:51). One can resist the Holy Spirit of God by despising the teachings of men that were inspired by the Holy Spirit. Don’t do that!