

Pentecost and the Nine Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Pentecost for most Western churches will be observed on Sunday, May 24, while many Eastern churches will observe it on Sunday, May 31. However, according to Scripture, neither date is technically correct. Biblically, Pentecost in 2026 actually begins at sundown on Thursday, May 21, and ends at nightfall on Saturday, May 23.

It always amazes me how serious students of the Bible — especially Christian theologians, scholars, leaders, and teachers — can read the biblical instructions concerning “the appointed time” of Pentecost/Shavuot and still fail to recognize that Scripture never presents it as a fixed Roman calendar observance.

Pentecost is the Greek name for the Jewish holiday of Shavuot. Derived from the Greek word *pentēkostē* (meaning "fiftieth"), the term was used in ancient Greek translations of the Hebrew Bible to denote the fiftieth day of the grain harvest counting after Passover.

The biblical text repeatedly says:

- count,
- seven Sabbaths,
- fifty days.

Nothing about Pentecost/Shavuot is presented as a static date permanently attached to a Gregorian calendar.

It is a feast determined by counting from Firstfruits, not by flipping to a preprinted church calendar.

The real lesson

But getting the date right is not the primary focus of what I want to address.

Nor is this teaching mainly about the richness and fullness of Pentecost itself — though its Scriptural and historical meaning is far deeper and more important than most believers realize.

What I want to discuss are the Nine Gifts of the Holy Spirit that emerged from the outpouring of the Spirit upon the 120 disciples waiting in the upper room for the fulfillment of Jesus' promise.

Before His ascension, Jesus told His disciples:

“It is to your advantage that I go away...”

— John 16:7

To the disciples, this statement must have sounded incomprehensible.

During their time with Him:

- Jesus had been their teacher,
- protector,
- provider,
- miracle worker,
- and visible manifestation of the presence of God.

From their perspective, His departure felt like loss.

Yet Jesus declared that His leaving was actually necessary because the coming of the Holy Spirit would fundamentally transform the people of God from followers gathered around Messiah physically into a Spirit-filled corporate body empowered to continue His ministry upon the earth.

The outpouring at Pentecost was not merely an emotional experience, nor simply the birth of revival meetings.

It was the inauguration of New Covenant life through the indwelling Holy Spirit.

What I learned from Derek Prince

Derek taught that these gifts are supernatural manifestations given by the Holy Spirit for the edification of the Body of Christ. They were never intended to exalt individuals, create celebrity ministries, or become badges of spiritual superiority.

They were given to strengthen, equip, protect, encourage, heal, and mature the Church, the Assembly of the Redeemed.

He also emphasized that these gifts are meant to function together:

- in unity,
- under Scriptural order,
- and through love.

Without love, the gifts become noise.

Without maturity, they become dangerous.

Without sound doctrine, they become vulnerable to deception.

Yet without the gifts themselves, the Church becomes powerless, institutional, and increasingly dependent upon human ability rather than the enabling power of the Holy Spirit.

Do You Know Your Gifts? Do You Use Your Gifts?

It is time for all of us to take a hard and honest assessment of what we have actually received from the Father through the Son by baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Have these gifts become active and cultivated within our lives?

Do they genuinely benefit and strengthen the Body of Christ?

Are they operating under the headship of Messiah and the guidance of the Holy Spirit?

Or have we either neglected them entirely or abused them through immaturity, disorder, and self-promotion?

Pentecost was never meant to produce passive believers or spiritual spectators.

It was meant to produce a Spirit-filled people through whom the life, wisdom, power, and presence of God would flow into the earth.

If you do not know, or have not received, your gifts from the Holy Spirit, then it is time to do so.

If you know what gifts have been entrusted to you but have never learned how to steward and operate in them biblically, then it is time to learn.

The gifts were not given for self-promotion, celebrity, or spiritual status.

They were given for service.

For edification.

For maturity.

For protection.

And for the strengthening of the Body of Christ.

And perhaps now more than ever, the Church desperately needs believers who know both the Spirit of God and the ways of God.

Our Father did not have Jesus pour out the Holy Spirit merely so believers could attend meetings and admire manifestations.

The Holy Spirit was given so the people of God could become functioning members of a living spiritual body under the headship of Messiah.

And perhaps now more than ever, the Church desperately needs believers who know both:

- the Spirit of God,
and
- the ways of God.

Because power without maturity leads to deception.

Gifts without character lead to corruption.

And spiritual experience without sound doctrine eventually produces confusion and disorder.

But when the Holy Spirit operates through mature believers under the Lordship of Christ, the Church becomes what Pentecost was always intended to produce:
a living dwelling place for the presence of God upon the earth.

Derek's Threefold Classification

Based on 1 Corinthians 12:8–10, Derek Prince divided the gifts into:

Foundational Scripture

1 Corinthians 12:7–11

“But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all:

for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit,

to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit,

to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.”

I. REVELATION GIFTS

These gifts reveal something supernaturally.

1. Word of Wisdom

Derek's Explanation

A supernatural revelation of God's wisdom concerning:

- what to do,
- how to act,
- or the divine solution to a situation.

It is not human intelligence or accumulated wisdom.

Derek emphasized:

A “word” of wisdom is only a fragment of God's total wisdom given for a specific situation.

Examples

- Joseph interpreting Pharaoh's dream and providing strategy.
- Jesus answering impossible questions from the Pharisees.
- Apostolic direction in crises.

Function

- Guidance
- Strategy

- Direction
- Governmental decisions

2. Word of Knowledge

Derek's Explanation

A supernatural revelation of facts that could not be known naturally.

This gift reveals:

- hidden conditions,
- secret facts,
- spiritual realities,
- or information known only by God.

Examples

- Jesus telling the Samaritan woman about her past.
- Peter knowing Ananias lied.
- Elisha knowing Gehazi's actions.

Derek Emphasis

This gift often works together with:

- healing,
- prophecy,
- and deliverance ministry.

3. Discerning of Spirits

Derek's Explanation

This is not "discernment" in the general sense.

It is specifically:

Supernatural insight into the spirit realm.

It enables a believer to recognize:

- the Holy Spirit,
- human spirits,
- or demonic spirits.

Derek Strongly Emphasized

This gift was crucial in:

- deliverance ministry,
- spiritual warfare,
- identifying false ministries,
- and exposing counterfeit spiritual manifestations.

Examples

- Paul discerning the spirit of divination in Acts 16.
- Jesus perceiving demonic spirits.

II. POWER GIFTS

These gifts do something supernaturally.

4. Gift of Faith

Derek's Explanation

This is not saving faith or ordinary faith.

It is:

Supernatural imparted faith for a specific situation.

This faith:

- does not struggle,
- does not doubt,
- simply knows God will act.

Examples

- Elijah calling down fire.
- Daniel in the lions' den.

- Jesus calming the storm.

Derek’s Observation

The gift of faith often precedes:

- miracles,
- healing,
- or divine intervention.

5. Gifts of Healings

Derek’s Explanation

Derek noted carefully that Scripture says:

- “gifts” (plural)
- of “healings” (plural)

He believed this suggests:

- different kinds of healings,
- for different conditions,
- operating through different people.

He Distinguished

Healing gifts are:

- supernatural,
- not medical skill,
- though God can work through medicine.

Categories Often Discussed

- physical healing,
- emotional healing,
- deliverance-related healing.

6. Working of Miracles

Derek’s Explanation

This gift produces supernatural intervention that overrides natural law.

Examples

- Raising the dead
- Multiplication of food
- Deliverance miracles
- Nature miracles

Important Distinction

Derek differentiated:

Healing	Miracle
May be progressive	Usually immediate
Restoration process	Direct supernatural intervention

III. VOCAL (INSPIRATIONAL) GIFTS

These gifts say something supernaturally.

7. Prophecy

Derek’s Explanation

Prophecy is:

Inspired speech in a known language.

It is given to:

- edify,
- exhort,
- comfort.

Important Distinction

Derek differentiated:

New Testament Prophecy	Old Testament Prophet
Congregational edification	Governmental authority
Partial revelation	Covenant spokesman
Subject to testing	National leadership role

This was very important in his teaching.

He warned against confusing:

- prophetic gifting with
- governmental authority.

8. Different Kinds of Tongues

Derek's Explanation

This is supernatural utterance in languages unknown to the speaker.

Prince distinguished between:

1. Personal prayer language
2. Public congregational tongues

Public Tongues

Require interpretation to edify the church.

Derek's View

Tongues are:

- biblical,
- valid today,
- powerful for prayer and worship,
- but must function in scriptural order.

9. Interpretation of Tongues

Derek's Explanation

Interpretation is:

The supernatural ability to make known the meaning of a tongue.

He emphasized:

- it is not translation,
- but interpretation of meaning.

Purpose

To make public tongues understandable so the church may be edified.

Derek's Larger Framework

1. The Gifts Are Supernatural

Derek consistently rejected reducing the gifts to:

- personality traits,
- natural abilities,
- psychological impressions.

2. The Gifts Must Operate Under Scriptural Authority

He strongly emphasized:

- order,
- accountability,
- testing,
- and maturity.

Especially regarding:

- prophecy,
- spiritual warfare,
- and deliverance.

3. Character Is More Important Than Gifts

This was a major Derek theme.

He repeatedly warned:

Spiritual gifts do not prove spiritual maturity.

A person may:

- operate in gifts,
- yet still be immature,
- fleshly,
- or morally compromised.

He tied this directly to:

- 1 Corinthians 13,
- Hebrews 5–6,
- and foundational discipleship.

Derek's Practical Warning

Derek often said the modern church made two opposite errors:

Error	Result
Rejecting spiritual gifts	Powerless Christianity
Exalting gifts above character	Deception and abuse

He believed the biblical solution was:

- foundations first,
- maturity,
- sound doctrine,
- then properly ordered spiritual gifts.

Related Themes

Derek believed these teachings connected to his broader framework on:

- deliverance
- spiritual warfare
- the baptism in the Holy Spirit
- foundations (Hebrews 6:1–2)
- the authority of Scripture
- plurality of leadership
- testing spiritual manifestations

Derek's Basic Summary Statement

A concise summary of his teaching would be:

The nine gifts of the Holy Spirit are supernatural manifestations given by the Holy Spirit to build up the Body of Christ, reveal God's power and wisdom, and equip believers for ministry—but they must always operate under biblical order, maturity, and godly character.

It's Time To Know — It's Time To Share

In the 1970s at Agape Fellowship and on Derek Prince' ministry teams, we openly discussed our giftings and our callings.

Why?

Because when people are actively engaged in real ministry, it becomes evident very quickly:

- who has what gifts,
- who does not,

- and at what level those gifts are actually operating.

Gifts are not truly discovered in theory alone.
They are revealed in function.

When people minister together over time, patterns emerge:

- some consistently operate in wisdom,
- others in teaching,
- others in discernment,
- others in healing,
- others in prophecy,
- others in helps,
- leadership,
- mercy,
- evangelism,
- or intercession.

You begin to recognize both:

- calling,
and
- capacity.

And just as importantly, maturity.

Because not all giftings operate at the same depth, authority, accuracy, or spiritual maturity. Some believers may have genuine gifts but little development. Others may have mature and well-tested ministries forged through years of obedience, suffering, discipline, and submission to the Holy Spirit.

This is one reason the early church functioned so differently than much of modern Christianity. Believers were not meant to sit anonymously in rows as passive observers. They were expected to become functioning members of a living spiritual body.

The gifts of the Holy Spirit were meant to operate visibly within the community of believers so the Body of Christ could:

- grow,
- mature,
- protect itself,
- discern truth from error,
- and minister effectively to others.

Today, many believers have never seriously identified:

- their gifts,
- their calling,
- or their function within the Body.

Others may know their gifts but have never been equipped, mentored, tested, or matured in their operation.

Still others have operated in genuine gifting but without sufficient character, accountability, humility, or doctrinal foundation.

The result is often:

- immaturity,
- confusion,
- abuse,
- burnout,
- or self-promotion.

But properly understood, spiritual gifts were never intended to exalt individuals.

They were given so the whole Body could be strengthened.

This is why Paul repeatedly emphasized:

- unity,
- order,
- love,
- maturity,
- and mutual edification.

The question is not merely:

“Do you have a gift?”

The real questions are:

- Do you know your gifts?
- Are your gifts mature?
- Are they submitted to the Lordship of Jesus Christ?
- Are they operating under biblical order?
- And are they genuinely strengthening the Body of Christ?

It is time for believers to move beyond merely talking about Pentecost.

It is time to become the kind of Spirit-filled people Pentecost was meant to produce.

Thanks for reading and blessings,
Rick Fox