

SPEAKING IN TONGUES

The Veiled Word, Its Interpretation, and the Spirit of Prophecy

*From the Letter to the Living Testimony —
Messiah Fully Formed Within His Body*



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Introduction — Why God Speaks in Mysteries

The Scriptures present a remarkable reality: God communicates His Word through prophets, parables, riddles, dreams, visions, similitudes, and historical testimony. The spoken or written form is a vessel carrying divine truth. Its significance may be concealed until the testimony is interpreted, and the hearer is called to receive what has been revealed.

Speaking in tongues, interpretation, and prophecy belong within this larger purpose of divine communication. A tongue carries a message whose meaning is not yet understood; interpretation makes its significance known; prophecy bears divine testimony that edifies, exhorts, and comforts. The Word directs its hearers toward the eternal God revealed in Messiah, and toward His formation within His people.

Scripture interprets Scripture. A matter is examined through two or three faithful, non-contradictory witnesses, giving priority to what Scripture explicitly declares and then to converging testimony and responsible typology. God is faithful and consistent; the understanding of His people grows as they hear, test, and obey His Word.

The vessel is not the treasure, and the messenger is not the One to be worshipped. Yet the vessel must not be despised, for it carries a testimony entrusted to human hands. Some received the meaning clearly, others perceived it only in part, and still others failed to recognize its significance. Through these differing responses, the oracles continued to bear witness to the God who had spoken.

Section One — The Eternal Word and the Language of Revelation

The same Word speaks through many forms

“I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets.” — Hosea 12:10, King James Version

“Son of man, put forth a riddle, and speak a parable unto the house of Israel.” — Ezekiel 17:2, King James Version

These passages establish that God deliberately communicates through figurative forms. A riddle does not cease to be a true testimony because its meaning requires interpretation. A vision is not false because its symbols do not explain themselves. The form is the means by which the message is presented.

Jesus continues this prophetic pattern. Matthew chapter 13, verses 34 and 35 describes His use of parables and relates it to the opening of things kept secret. In John chapter 16, verse 25, Jesus distinguishes speaking in proverbs from showing the Father plainly. His own teaching therefore provides a clear example of a movement from veiled expression toward more open disclosure.

“These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father.” — John 16:25, King James Version

The eternal Word is not confined to one literary form. John chapter 1 identifies the Word with the One who became flesh. Hebrews chapter 13, verse 8 affirms the constancy of Jesus Messiah. The continuity of the divine Speaker does not require every utterance to be figurative, but it allows us to recognize a consistent purpose across differing forms of revelation: God makes Himself known.

The testimony can remain before its meaning is recognized

Moses was granted exceptional intimacy in divine communication, as Numbers chapter 12, verses 6 through 8 declares. God also made His counsel known to prophets and faithful hearers. Yet understanding was not uniform. Daniel chapter 12, verse 8 records a prophet confessing, “I heard, but I understood not,” while First Peter chapter 1, verses 10 through 12 describes prophets searching into the significance of their own testimony. Romans chapter 3,

verse 2 identifies Israel as the people entrusted with the oracles of God. Together, these witnesses distinguish genuine revelation from the varying degrees to which it was recognized.

The extraordinary feature of the oracles is that they could be transmitted and preserved even when some of their custodians did not recognize their fuller meaning. The Scriptures did not require universal understanding in order to remain a testimony. Indeed, a writing could be honored and guarded by those who failed to perceive that it also confronted their own conduct. The Word remained available to bear witness when its meaning was brought into the light.

Section Two — The Singular Veil and the Glory It Conceals

The veil in the sanctuary

“and the vail shall divide unto you between the holy place and the most holy.” — Exodus 26:33, King James Version

The sanctuary veil establishes a boundary. The Holy Place is not common or unholy; it is itself holy. Yet the veil marks the distinction between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. Hebrews chapters 8 through 10 explains that the earthly sanctuary serves as a shadow or representation of greater heavenly realities and that Messiah opens the way of access to God.

The veil on Moses and upon the heart

Exodus chapter 34 describes Moses covering his face. Second Corinthians chapter 3 explicitly takes up that event and moves from Moses' veil to the condition of the hearer. Paul writes that when Moses is read, a veil lies upon the heart, and that turning to the Lord removes the veil. The physical covering and the inward obstruction are linked by Paul himself.

“But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away.” — 2 Corinthians 3:15–16, King James Version

Unveiling leads beyond information

“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” — 2 Corinthians 3:18, King James Version

The destination is transformation. When the glory of Messiah is recognized, the purpose is not merely to win an argument about words. It is that the beholder should be changed into the image revealed. This is why our study must always return to the fruit of interpretation.

Section Three — Tongues, Interpretation, and Prophecy

Mysteries can be spoken without being understood

“For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.” — 1 Corinthians 14:2, King James Version

Paul connects tongues with mysteries and with speech that the gathered hearers do not understand. The testimony must become intelligible if it is to benefit the congregation. In the wider scriptural pattern, divine truth is frequently conveyed through a figure whose significance becomes clear when it is interpreted.

“greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.” — 1 Corinthians 14:5, King James Version

Interpretation makes communication useful to its hearers. The tongue carries a message whose significance is not yet accessible; the interpretation unveils the meaning, allowing the congregation to receive instruction and edification.

What does the unveiling accomplish?

“But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.” — 1 Corinthians 14:3, King James Version

First Corinthians chapter 12 identifies tongues, interpretation, and prophecy as distinguishable gifts. First Corinthians chapter 14 then shows how they serve the same body: the tongue is interpreted so that its message may edify, and prophecy communicates divine truth for edification, exhortation, and comfort. Their service converges upon the growth of Messiah’s people.

“for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” — Revelation 19:10, King James Version

This is our controlling direction. A genuine messenger does not become the object of worship. The testimony points toward God and Messiah. Revelation chapters 19 and 22 show an angel refusing John’s worship and redirecting him toward God. The vessel must serve the revelation, not replace the One revealed.

The sign and the response of the hearer

At Pentecost, Acts chapter 2 describes people from many regions hearing the wonderful works of God, asking what the event means, and then hearing Peter explain Joel and David concerning Jesus Messiah. Some inquire; others mock. Peter’s explanation brings conviction to many hearts. The narrative contains both an explicit reference to native dialects and a theological unveiling through Scripture. The spiritual purpose must be examined without erasing either feature.

In First Corinthians chapter 14, verses 21 through 25, Paul quotes Isaiah concerning strange speech and rejected instruction, then contrasts unintelligible tongues with prophecy that exposes the secrets of the heart. The revealed testimony is meant to be understood and to edify. Through the Scriptures, God repeatedly communicates truth in forms that invite interpretation, so that what was concealed may be made known and the heart may be examined.

Section Four — Fire, Judgment, and the Formation of Messiah

One truth, differing responses

“Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?” — Jeremiah 23:29, King James Version

“Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is.” — 1 Corinthians 3:13, King James Version

Fire provides a powerful biblical image of divine Truth encountered in its revealing and testing work. The same truth illuminates what is faithful and exposes what contradicts it. The hearer who welcomes correction may experience purification and joy; the hearer who resists may experience offense and judgment. Malachi chapter 3 depicts refining fire. John chapter 3 describes the differing responses to revealed light.

Jeremiah compares God’s Word to fire, and First Corinthians chapter 3 describes fire testing the quality of what has been built. These witnesses illuminate the discerning power of revelation. Hebrews chapter 4, verse 12 describes the living Word as a two-edged sword, discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

The end of prophecy is not the glorification of the speaker

“My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you.” — Galatians 4:19, King James Version

“Christ in you, the hope of glory.” — Colossians 1:27, King James Version

The measure of revelation is not the strangeness of an utterance, the brilliance of an interpretation, or the reputation of the messenger. It is the faithful unveiling of divine truth and its fruit in the hearer. Ephesians chapter 4 describes the body growing toward unity and the fullness of Messiah. This purpose also explains why the oracles must be preserved and why understanding must continue to mature.

Section Five — The Oracles Preserved and the Mystery Progressively Revealed

The written testimony endures

“Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.” — Romans 3:2, King James Version

The oracles of God were entrusted to Israel, and their transmission involved generations of hearers, teachers, and custodians. Some received profound understanding: Moses spoke with God with unusual directness, and the prophets were entrusted with His counsel. Others grasped particular portions while still searching for their fuller significance. The remarkable point is not that the oracles were universally misunderstood, but that their preservation did not depend upon every custodian understanding all that they carried.

“And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?” — Daniel 12:8, King James Version

Daniel received a prophetic revelation whose outcome he did not fully comprehend. First Peter chapter 1, verses 10 through 12 likewise describes prophets searching diligently into the salvation about which they testified. Their searching demonstrates that genuine revelation and incomplete understanding can coexist. The faithful transmission of a message does not require every messenger, reader, or later guardian to perceive its entire significance.

An even more searching irony emerges when the preserved oracles confront the very people who claim to defend them. In John chapter 5, verses 39 through 46, Jesus addresses hearers who searched the Scriptures and appealed to Moses, yet resisted the One to whom those Scriptures testified. In Matthew chapter 21, verses 42 through 45, Jesus invokes the rejected cornerstone, and the religious leaders perceive that His parables speak against them. The testimony they possessed could expose their own conduct. Its meaning had not been absent from the writing; it had not been recognized by those hearers.

This possibility was present from the beginning of Israel’s custody of the Law. Deuteronomy chapter 31, verse 26 commands that the book of the Law be placed beside the ark of the covenant “that it may be there for a witness against thee.” The preserved writing was therefore capable of testifying not only to the promises of God, but also against the unfaithfulness of the people who possessed it. Preservation and self-examination belonged together.

A veiled prophetic form could sharpen this irony. A hearer might recognize the outward account, defend its authority, and even apply its rebuke to someone else, while failing to perceive its judgment upon himself. Nathan’s parable to David in Second Samuel chapter 12 makes this pattern unmistakable. David first condemns the injustice described in the story; when Nathan declares, “Thou art the man,” the same testimony turns upon David’s own heart. The parable had not changed. Its application had become clear.

This does not mean that concealment guaranteed that the text would never be altered, nor that every custodian misunderstood it. Rather, the enduring oracles could continue to speak across generations despite differing levels of insight. At times their figurative form allowed a rebuke to remain unrecognized by those implicated in it. When the meaning was unveiled, the words already received and preserved became a searching witness against hypocrisy and an invitation to repentance.

This is why the preservation of the letter and the unveiling of its spiritual testimony must be held together. The vessel is faithfully received; the message is examined; and the hearer, rather than standing above the Word as its judge, discovers that the Word also examines him.

Understanding grows through faithful hearing

“For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.” — Matthew 13:12, King James Version

Jesus speaks these words while explaining why He teaches in parables. The disciples have come seeking the meaning of His words. They receive an explanation and are thereby equipped to recognize further testimony. The more faithfully a hearer receives and uses what has been given, the more capable that hearer becomes of discerning what follows.

Mark chapter 4, verses 24 and 25 commands the hearer to pay attention to what is heard. Luke chapter 8, verse 18 emphasizes how one hears. Hebrews chapter 5, verse 14 connects maturity with senses exercised through use to discern good and evil. These passages describe understanding as something that must be received, exercised, and made fruitful. It is not a collection of impressive statements retained without obedience.

This is why a matter is tested through two or three faithful, non-contradictory witnesses. Each genuine witness helps illuminate another. Their agreement does not manufacture truth; it helps us recognize what God has already spoken. As understanding matures, the same dependable Word yields greater clarity.

The Word remains the measure

God is not a shifting shadow. Malachi chapter 3, verse 6 declares that the Lord does not change. James chapter 1, verse 17 speaks of the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness or shadow of turning. Numbers chapter 23, verse 19 affirms that God does not lie. His nature is faithful, and His Word can be trusted.

The stability of divine truth gives confidence to build upon genuinely established principles. The hearer remains teachable, because understanding grows while God’s truth remains faithful. A newly recognized witness can clarify a former reading, and the receptive heart welcomes the light of correction.

Section Six — The Opened Ear, the Consumed Scroll, and the Purified Tongue

The messenger first receives the testimony

“The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.” — Isaiah 50:4, King James Version

The instructed tongue begins with an attentive ear. The servant receives before speaking. Verse 5 continues by describing an opened ear and a refusal to turn away in rebellion. Hearing and obedience belong together: the messenger is not merely a mouth producing religious sounds, but a servant formed by the Word he communicates.

“Son of man, all my words that I shall speak unto thee receive in thine heart, and hear with thine ears.” — Ezekiel 3:10, King James Version

Ezekiel is commanded to eat a scroll before speaking to Israel. The image makes the inward nature of prophetic reception unmistakable. The scroll is not merely carried in his hand; it is taken into his inward parts. The written testimony becomes something he must receive personally before he communicates it publicly.

Jeremiah chapter 15, verse 16 likewise describes finding and eating God’s words. In Revelation chapter 10, verses 8 through 11, John eats the little book, tastes sweetness in his mouth, experiences bitterness within, and is

commissioned to prophesy again. The Word received inwardly may bring delight and also the weight of difficult truth. Prophetic ministry involves more than announcing what sounds pleasing.

The tongue reveals the condition of the heart

“For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” — Matthew 12:34, King James Version

Jesus connects the words that leave the mouth with the treasure stored within the heart. James chapter 3 then warns that a tongue which blesses God while cursing people made in His likeness displays a profound contradiction. The purification of speech must therefore reach beyond vocabulary. It concerns what is believed, loved, intended, and practiced.

“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.” — James 3:17, King James Version

James provides a measure for the messenger. True wisdom does not establish itself merely by sounding mysterious, forceful, or learned. It is recognizable through purity, mercy, humility, sincerity, and good fruit. The tongue that faithfully carries divine testimony must not become an instrument for exalting the speaker.

Fire reveals and refines

“Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?” — Jeremiah 23:29, King James Version

The revealed Truth can illuminate what is righteous and simultaneously expose what contradicts it. Isaiah chapter 6 describes the prophet’s unclean lips being touched with a burning coal before his commission. Malachi chapter 3 presents the Lord as a refiner purifying silver. First Corinthians chapter 3 describes fire testing the quality of each person’s work. The same testing can reveal what endures and what must be removed.

For the receptive hearer, exposure can lead to repentance and refinement. For the resistant hearer, the same testimony may be experienced as offense or judgment. The difference lies not in the faithfulness of God’s Truth but in what the hearer does when confronted by it. The purpose of purification is that the messenger may increasingly speak from a heart being formed into the likeness of Messiah.

Section Seven — The Washing of Water, the Wine of the Wedding, and the Prepared Bride

The Word washes the Bride

“That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church...” — Ephesians 5:26–27, King James Version

Paul places the washing of water by the Word within his teaching concerning Messiah and His Bride. The cleansing serves a greater purpose: the Bride is being prepared for holy communion with the Bridegroom. Jesus declares in John chapter 15, verse 3 that His disciples are clean through the Word He has spoken. In John chapter 17, verse 17 He prays, “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” The testimony does not merely inform; it sanctifies.

At Cana, the sign manifests glory

John chapter 2 describes six stone waterpots used in the manner of Jewish purification. At a wedding feast, Jesus commands the vessels to be filled with water, and the water becomes wine. The master of the feast recognizes the good wine, while John declares that through this beginning of signs Jesus manifested His glory and His disciples believed on Him.

The setting invites us to consider the relationship between cleansing, transformation, joy, and covenantal union. Water associated with purification becomes wine served at a wedding. As a typological witness, the sign can illustrate how the outward testimony of cleansing leads toward the inward joy of recognizing the Bridegroom. The event is not reduced to an allegory: its significance begins with the sign John records and the glory he says it manifested.

The Hebrew word for wine is yayin, written יַיִן, and the Hebrew word for secret or intimate counsel is sod, written סוד. Both have the numerical value seventy in traditional Hebrew gematria. That association is a useful illustration of mystery disclosed, but the stronger biblical testimony comes from the sign itself, from the washing of the Word, and from Scripture's explicit interpretation of marriage as a mystery concerning Messiah and His people.

The Bridegroom and the new wine

“This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.” — Ephesians 5:32, King James Version

Paul reveals that marriage bears testimony to Messiah and His people. In Matthew chapter 9, Jesus identifies Himself as the bridegroom and then speaks of new wine and new wineskins. The vessel must be suited to what it carries. The imagery is particularly fitting for a teaching concerned with the Word, its outward expression, and the inward formation necessary to receive its meaning.

The Bride's preparation is not merely intellectual. Revelation chapter 19, verses 7 and 8 describes the marriage of the Lamb and identifies the Bride's fine linen with the righteous deeds of the saints. The Word received and understood must become a life of faithfulness. The purpose of the washing is the preparation of a people who reflect the character of the Bridegroom.

Section Eight — The Messenger, the Mystery, and the Living Witness

The messenger must never replace the One who sent him

“See thou do it not... worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” — Revelation 19:10, King James Version

The angel who delivers revelation refuses worship. He is a fellow servant bearing testimony, not the One to whom worship belongs. Revelation chapter 22 repeats the same warning. Acts chapter 10 records Peter refusing Cornelius's act of worship, and Acts chapter 14 shows Paul and Barnabas rejecting divine honors offered by a crowd. These witnesses teach us to distinguish the messenger from the divine Truth being communicated.

An idol word is an interpretation that directs ultimate devotion toward the outward vessel, symbol, or messenger instead of God. The danger may arise even when the original vessel was genuine. Second Kings chapter 18, verse 4 records the destruction of the bronze serpent after it became an object of incense offerings. A God-given sign had been turned into an object of misplaced devotion.

The mystery unveiled becomes a testimony

“For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.” — 1 Corinthians 14:2, King James Version

Paul connects tongues with mysteries and then insists that intelligibility matters for the gathered body. In First Corinthians chapter 14, verse 5, interpretation allows the congregation to receive edification. In verse 3, prophecy serves edification, exhortation, and comfort. The testimony must reach the hearer with meaning if it is to strengthen the body.

The prophets offer repeated examples of a message presented through a figure and then unveiled. Ezekiel is commanded to speak a riddle and explain it. Daniel interprets a symbolic dream. Jesus explains parables and opens the Scriptures concerning Himself. These examples reveal a dependable pattern: the testimony is carried through a form, its significance is made known, and the hearer is called to respond to the Truth revealed.

The spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus. The unveiled meaning must therefore direct attention toward God and His Messiah rather than toward the brilliance of the interpreter. The Word is not a stage for the messenger. It is a living witness through which God calls His people toward understanding, correction, and communion.

The body is built up in love

“My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you.” — Galatians 4:19, King James Version

The apostolic labor has a formative purpose. Colossians chapter 1, verses 27 and 28 speaks of Messiah within, the hope of glory, and of presenting every person mature in Him. Ephesians chapter 4, verses 11 through 16 describes ministries equipping the saints so that the whole body grows toward the fullness of Messiah, speaking the Truth in love.

The ministry of tongues, interpretation, and prophecy must be considered in light of that destination. The message is not fulfilled merely because it has been spoken. Nor is it complete simply because an explanation has been offered. The Truth is meant to be received, tested, obeyed, and made fruitful in the life of the hearer. The corporate body grows as each member contributes its appointed work in love.

The Bride is washed by the Word. The heart receives the testimony. The tongue learns to speak faithfully. The messenger points beyond himself. As this work unfolds, every member has a part in the growth of the body, and the revealed Truth bears fruit as Messiah is formed within His people.

Section Nine — The Word Received: Milk, Meat, and the Work of the Members

From first instruction to exercised discernment

The writer of Hebrews rebukes hearers who ought to be teachers yet still require milk rather than strong meat. Hebrews chapter 5, verses 12 through 14 does not despise milk; it places milk and meat in relation to maturity. The mature have their senses exercised through use to discern good and evil. The point is not that advanced knowledge makes a person superior. It is that faithful reception and practice train discernment. First Corinthians chapter 3, verses 1 and 2 likewise describes Paul feeding the Corinthians milk because they were not ready for meat. The same Word nourishes people according to their capacity to receive it.

Matthew chapter 13, verses 11 and 12 places this principle beside the mysteries of the kingdom. To the one who has, more will be given. Mark chapter 4 adds the command to take heed what one hears, and Luke chapter 8 adds the command to take heed how one hears. Understanding already received becomes a foundation for further understanding when it is faithfully examined, retained, and practiced. God is consistent in His nature; His truth does not change as our understanding deepens. Malachi chapter 3, verse 6, James chapter 1, verse 17, and Numbers chapter 23, verse 19 give the hearer confidence in that dependability.

Different members, distinct works, one increase

Romans chapter 12 and First Corinthians chapter 12 present the body of Messiah as many members performing different functions. Ephesians chapter 4 explains that the ministries equip the saints for the work of service and the building up of the body. A hand is not an eye, and an eye is not an ear; neither may any member boast as though it were the whole body. The laying on of hands appears in Scripture alongside blessing, appointment, commissioning, and ministry. Numbers chapter 27 describes Joshua being commissioned; Acts chapter 13 identifies a work for Barnabas and Saul before the community lays hands upon them and sends them. The meaning of the act is illuminated by the work and relationship in which it occurs.

In Acts chapter 9, Ananias is sent to Saul, whose encounter with Jesus has overturned his previous religious judgment. Ananias ministers to him, and Saul receives sight and begins proclaiming Messiah. Acts chapter 18 presents Priscilla and Aquila explaining the way of God more accurately to Apollos, who then demonstrates from the Scriptures that Jesus is Messiah. Acts chapter 19 presents Paul explaining the relation of John's baptism to Jesus

before the disciples receive baptism and subsequently speak with tongues and prophesy. These accounts portray distinct works carried out through distinct members. The workers do not own the divine treasure. As Paul says in First Corinthians chapter 3, he planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.

Section Ten — The Seed, the Heart, and the Fire of Revelation

One Word, different soil

Jesus supplies the interpretation of the sower in Luke chapter 8, verse 11: the seed is the Word of God. Matthew chapter 13 explains that some hear without understanding; some receive with joy but have no root; others allow the cares of the world and deceitfulness of riches to choke the Word; good soil hears, understands, and bears fruit. Mark emphasizes receiving, while Luke emphasizes keeping the Word with patience. The same testimony encounters different conditions of the heart, and the fruit makes the reception visible.

Simeon foretells in Luke chapter 2, verses 34 and 35 that Messiah will be the occasion for the falling and rising of many, so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. John chapter 3 describes people either coming to the light or avoiding it because their deeds will be exposed. First Corinthians chapter 14, verses 24 and 25 describes intelligible prophecy revealing the secrets of the heart. The unveiling does not merely tell the hearer about God; it can also reveal the hearer to himself. Nathan's parable to David in Second Samuel chapter 12 provides a vivid example: David condemns the injustice in the story before hearing the words, "Thou art the man."

The same fire examines what is built

Jeremiah chapter 23, verse 29 compares God's Word to fire. First Corinthians chapter 3, verses 12 through 15 portrays the fire testing the quality of work built upon the foundation of Messiah. Malachi chapter 3 presents a refiner who purifies silver; Isaiah chapter 6 portrays the cleansing of prophetic lips by a burning coal. In this teaching, fire is a compelling image of Truth revealed: it illuminates what is right and exposes what contradicts it. One person may rejoice at the light, while another may feel rebuked and resist.

This work is not merely punitive. Second Corinthians chapter 7, verse 10 distinguishes godly sorrow leading to repentance from sorrow leading to death. Revelation chapter 3, verse 19 connects the Lord's rebuke and chastening with love and the call to repent. The same revealed Truth can expose error and become the occasion for purification. Its intended fruit in the receptive heart is correction, righteousness, and love.

Section Eleven — The Bridegroom, the Veil, and the Holy Dwelling

The veil and the recognition of glory

Exodus chapter 26 describes the veil dividing the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. Exodus chapter 34 records Moses covering his face after speaking with God. Second Corinthians chapter 3 draws Moses' covering into the experience of those who hear Moses read: the veil lies upon the heart, and turning to the Lord removes it. The veil speaks of glory present yet not fully recognized or approached. It can be expressed through the form in which testimony is presented and affect eyes, ears, and the understanding heart. The revealed message is not changed when its significance is opened.

Hebrews chapter 8 describes the earthly sanctuary as a copy and shadow of heavenly things. Hebrews chapter 10, verses 19 and 20 speaks of access through the veil in relation to Messiah's flesh. The movement is toward the Holy Presence. Second Corinthians chapter 3, verse 18 then describes believers beholding the Lord's glory with unveiled face and being transformed into the same image. Recognition serves transformation. The glory is not given merely for admiration but for communion and change.

The bridal testimony reaches its fulfillment

Genesis chapter 24 records Rebekah veiling herself as she approaches Isaac. The bridal covering gives us an image of recognition and intimate covenantal encounter. Ephesians chapter 5 explains the greater mystery of marriage in relation to Messiah and His people. The Bridegroom washes the Bride with water by the Word, preparing her to be holy and without blemish. Revelation chapter 19 identifies the fine linen of the Bride with the righteous deeds of the saints. The prepared Bride does not merely know the right words; her life bears the fruit of the testimony she has received.

Revelation chapter 21 presents the New Jerusalem as a Bride adorned for her husband, and declares that the dwelling of God is with humanity. Ephesians chapter 2, verses 21 and 22 describes the people of God being built together as a habitation through the Spirit. John sees no separate temple in the city, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. Revelation chapter 22 says His servants shall see His face. The testimony of the sanctuary and the Bride thus converges upon unveiled communion: God dwelling with His people, and His people living in His light.

Section Twelve — The Spirit of Prophecy and the Fullness of Messiah

The meaning of the message and the measure of its fruit

First Corinthians chapters 12 through 14 place tongues, interpretation, revelation, and prophecy within the one body. In chapter 14, verse 2, Paul says the speaker in a tongue speaks mysteries in the Spirit. In verse 5, interpretation makes the utterance edifying to the congregation. In verse 3, prophecy builds up, exhorts, and comforts. The communication of a mystery, its interpretation, and its effect upon the body belong within one purpose: the people of God must be strengthened by intelligible divine testimony.

Scripture also displays veiled presentation through Ezekiel's riddle, Daniel's dream, Jesus' parables, and the symbolic visions of Revelation. Their explanations make visible the truth carried by their forms. John chapter 16, verse 25 records Jesus promising to speak plainly of the Father rather than in proverbs. Luke chapter 24 shows Him opening Moses and the prophets concerning Himself. The Word remains the faithful vessel; interpretation brings its significance into the light. Revelation chapter 19, verse 10 declares that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. The message must point to God and Messiah rather than turn the messenger into an object of worship.

God has entrusted His people with a living and dependable Word. Moses received divine counsel, prophets communicated visions and riddles, and generations preserved the testimony with differing measures of understanding. Messiah interpreted the writings concerning Himself. What is concealed within a form of presentation can be made known through interpretation, bringing both divine glory and the condition of the hearer into the light.

First Corinthians chapter 13 places the gifts beneath the enduring primacy of love. Paul says we know in part and prophesy in part; now we see through a mirror in an enigma, but then face to face. His illustration of childhood and maturity links speaking, thinking, and understanding. Knowledge without love can become a noisy vessel that fails to communicate the character of the One it claims to represent. The Spirit's work is measured not only by what is revealed but by what is formed in the people receiving it.

Galatians chapter 4, verse 19 expresses the labor of ministry as Messiah being formed within believers. Colossians chapter 1, verses 27 and 28 names the mystery as Messiah within, the hope of glory, and aims to present every person mature in Him. Ephesians chapter 4 directs the entire body toward unity in faith and knowledge, growing into the fullness of Messiah and speaking Truth in love. This is the destination of the testimony. The Bride is washed, the heart is illuminated, the tongue is purified, the members perform their works, and the corporate body becomes a living witness.

Conclusion — From the Veiled Word to the Living Witness

God has entrusted His people with a living and dependable Word. The prophets received visions and riddles; the Scriptures preserved their testimony; Messiah interpreted the writings concerning Himself. The message can be concealed in its presentation and become known through interpretation. Its unveiling brings both divine glory and the hearer's condition into the light.

The purpose of speaking in tongues, interpretation, and prophecy is therefore considered in relation to divine communication that becomes intelligible and fruitful. The utterance is not the goal. The messenger is not the treasure. The outward vessel is not the object of worship. The testimony must bring the hearer toward the eternal God revealed in Messiah.

The Word is received so that it may be understood; understood so that it may be obeyed; obeyed so that it may become fruitful. The fire of Truth reveals, examines, and refines. The washing of the Word prepares the Bride. The veil gives way to the recognition of glory. And the ultimate testimony is a people in whom Messiah is being formed, until the body grows toward His fullness in love. Watch. Test. Walk. Witness.