

The Period of Spiritual Gifts

Contemporary gifts continue until the rapture (Eph. 4.13). **Revelatory** gifts (no complete canon) and **confirmatory** gifts (authenticate the new message) have **ceased**.

What Gifts Have Ceased? Revelatory Gifts

- **Apostles.** One *sent forth*. Apostles were *specifically commissioned* and *sent* by the Lord Jesus Himself. They had great *authority* and were *miracle* workers. **2 Cor. 12:12:** *Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.* These particular signs were: casting out demons; speaking in tongues; taking up serpents, drinking poison (John and Barnabas); laying hands on the sick and healing them, Mark 16.17-18. **Twelve Apostles of the Lamb** had *witnessed* the Lord's *earthly ministry* and *resurrection* (Acts 1.21-22). *Apostles of Christ* had been *sent* by the risen Christ (1 Cor. 9.1). Paul was the **last** (1 Cor. 15.8-9). No apostles or apostolic succession today. In Crete, Titus was told to appoint *elders*, not apostles (Titus 1.5).
- **Prophets.** To *declare forth*. They spoke *direct revelation* from God (no completed canon). They communicated the mind of God for the moment, e.g. (Acts 21) Agabus, Paul would be bound in Jerusalem.
- **Distinguishing of spirits.** To discern between *true* and *false* spiritual manifestations.
- **Word of knowledge/wisdom.** A divine revelation of spiritual insight and understanding (knowledge). Wisdom = the *application* of that knowledge. **Gal. 1:12** *For I did not receive it (gospel) from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.* **2 Peter 3:15** *Our beloved brother Paul... wrote to you according to the wisdom given him.*

What Gifts Have Ceased? Confirmatory Gifts

- **Faith.** Not saving faith, or faith for daily living. Linked with *healing* and *miracles* (1 Cor. 12.9). **Acts 6:8** *And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.* [Disciples could not cast out the demon possessed son]. **Matthew 17:20** *And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.*
- **Miracles.** Literally 'powers'. Manifestations of *supernatural* power, e.g. Paul raising Eutychus (Acts 20).
- **Healing.** Healing of physical sickness, even through Peter's *shadow* or Paul's *handkerchief* (Acts 5, 19).
- **Tongues.** Speaking in *known earthly* languages never before learned. Also *revelatory* (1 Cor. 14.2). Tongues speaking was a sign to Israel (1 Cor. 14.21-22, Isa. 28.11-21). The church at Corinth met next door to the Jewish synagogue (Acts 18.7). When Gentile believers spoke in tongues it was a sign to the unbelieving Jews that God was about to judge Israel (AD 70). There was no need for tongues after this.
- **Interpretation** of tongues. Understanding a foreign language never before learned so *all* would be edified.

Why Have They Ceased? Confirmatory Gifts

There are **three** main **periods** of signs, i.e. *men* exercising miraculous powers.

Horlock: *As far as we know, no miraculous powers were given to any man before Moses! No miracles were worked, for example, by Abraham the man of faith or by godly Joseph.* Even John the Baptist, the greatest of the prophets and filled with the Spirit, did *no sign* (John 10.41).

Period **One:** *Moses* and (his successor) *Joshua*. Given at the institution of the **law** and that Israel might believe *Moses* (Ex. 4.1, 5) was sent from God to deliver them. **Revelation** then comes (the Law). Signs cease.

Period **Two:** *Elijah* and *Elisha*. Given at the institution of the **prophets** and that Israel might be brought out of unbelief (idolatry). **Revelation** then comes (Prophets). Signs cease.

Period **Three:** *Christ* and the *Apostles*. Given at the institution of the **church** and that unbelieving Israel might accept their Messiah. Revelation then comes (NT). Signs cease.

- The purpose of these signs was to authenticate the messenger and his message. **1 Kings 17:24** *And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth.*
- They were especially for the Jews. **1 Cor. 1:22** *For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom.*
- The gospel had been confirmed through signs to Israel (Heb. 2.4). Now rejected, the gospel went to the Gentiles.
- Signs were only performed by **Apostles** or those on whom the apostles laid their hands (Stephen, Philip, Acts 6).
- There are **no** apostles or apostolic succession today (no replacement of James, Acts 12), therefore no signs.

Augustine (AD 354-420). Christian theologian and writer. *The Holy Ghost fell upon them that believed: and they spake with tongues, which they had not learned, as the Spirit gave them utterance. These were signs adapted to the time. For there must be a sign of the Holy Spirit in all tongues, to shew that the Gospel of God was to run through all tongues over the whole earth. That thing was done for a sign, and it passed away. A sign that has been **satisfied**.*

When? Period of the Jew first, then the Gentile. Period of opportunity to repent, 40 years until AD70.

AD60: **Acts 28:28** *Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.*

Why Have They Ceased? Revelatory Gifts

They are for the **foundation** (not the 21st storey). **Eph 2:20** *And are built upon the foundation (laid by and consisting) of the **apostles** and **prophets**, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.*

1 Corinthians 13:8 *Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.*

Context: They must pursue the *permanent* fruit of the Spirit (love) rather than *transitory* gifts of the Spirit (tongues). Prophecy, tongues and knowledge. Why these three? They are **revelational**.

Prophecy and knowledge would 'fail' and 'vanish away' – put out of action (by God). Tongues would 'cease'.

1 Corinthians 13:9 *For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.*

These revelatory gifts were piecemeal. They were fragmented and incomplete revelations.

1 Corinthians 13:10 *But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.*

'perfect' (*teleios*) – never refers to the Second Coming. Means 'having attained the end or purpose, complete'.

Contrasts the partial **revelations** of prophecy, tongues etc. It is complete **revelation** – the word of God.

When the complete (revelation) comes, the (gifts communicating) partial (revelation) pass away (no longer necessary).

Peter knew Paul was writing Scripture (1 Pet. 3.15-16). Paul knew he was completing Scripture (Col. 1.25-26).

1 Corinthians 13:12 *For **now** we see through a glass, darkly; but **then** face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.*

Now = apostolic age (pre-canon). Like looking into a polished bronze mirror from Corinth. Imperfect image of myself.

Then = post apostolic age (post-canon). 'Face to face' means *full and clear revelation* (Ex. 33.11), **not** visual sight.

Then shall I know, a full revelation of all that we are in Christ and His will for us.

1 Corinthians 13:13 *And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.*

Now – in the present age, faith, hope and love abide. But love is the greatest. Why?

At Christ's coming, **faith** will give way to *sight*, **hope** will be *fulfilled*, but **love** will never cease.

When? Now that **I am** become a man (v.11). The process was already coming to completion (AD60).

Jude wrote of the faith once and for all delivered to the saints (AD68). John finished writing in the 90s.

Joshua 24:15 *Choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. Who or what will you serve? The world? TV? Your job? Internet? Yourself? Lust?*

We will serve the Lord! **Put away** foreign gods and **incline** (bow down, stretch out, turn) your *heart* to the Lord.