

San Juan Church of Christ

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What Does God's Word Say About...

Some Early Gifts of the Holy Spirit

The scriptural content that will be used in this article is found in 1 Cor. 13:8-12. When Paul wrote in verse 8 that "Love never fails," he explains that spiritual gifts were temporary and must pass away. Love is what all Christians must have and would never pass away. "But if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away." Prophecy, which is the foretelling of future events and inspirational teaching without the complete written word of God, given by the apostles, would be done away. "If there are tongues, they will cease." Speaking in tongues was a gift that allowed one to speak in a known language that had never been learned. This too would cease. "If there is knowledge, it will be done away." The time would come when miraculous knowledge would cease. All of these spiritual gifts pertained to the introductory age of the church. These powers were given so that the gospel could be given to men without the complete written word of God.

Paul wrote in verse 9: "For we know in part and we prophesy in part." At the time Paul wrote this verse there was certain scripture that had not been revealed from God. The knowledge of God's will was dependent upon those possessing the gift of prophecy. Paul wrote in verse 10: "But when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away." These miraculous gifts were to continue in the church to guide and instruct it until the completed will of God [scripture] had been written.

There are two reasons why the gifts of the Spirit are not now given to men. First, there are no apostles now living to impart these gifts. In order to receive miraculous gifts the apostles would have to be present to lay their hands on others that they might receive these gifts of the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14-18). Secondly, when the "perfect" comes, which is the complete revelation that we now have in the New Testament, men can now learn all truth recorded in the Bible. This complete revelation given to man will lead him into all spiritual blessings of God in this world, and the eternal home to come. Men should study the word to know the complete will of God. It is not necessary to have miracles today to make known the will of God.

In verse 11 Paul wrote "When I was a child, I used to speak like a child... when I became a man, I did away with childish things." Paul was comparing this time of partial miraculous gifts in the church to childhood, but when the "perfect law" was completed (written word of God) one became a man.

In verse 12 Paul explains that the knowledge we possess today through the completed word of God is greater than any one of the miraculous gifts that they possessed in the 1st century.

Please send any comments, questions, or requests for a Bible study to:
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