

Miraculous Spiritual Gifts

In the early years of the church, many Christians possessed miraculous spiritual gifts. The purpose of these gifts was to confirm the word they were preaching, which is plainly stated in these passages:

Mark 16:20 – And [the apostles] went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them, and confirmed the word by the signs that followed.

Hebrews 2:3-4 – ³...After [the word of salvation] was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, ⁴God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.

These gifts included miraculous healing, prophecy, speaking in tongues, and others (1 Corinthians 12:8-10).

Today, Christians no longer possess such gifts. Many people still claim to have them, but their claims are false.

Here is the proof that the gifts have ceased. First of all, it is quite evident that no one is performing miracles like those of New Testament times. For example, when Peter and John healed a man who had been lame from birth, it was instantaneous and undeniable (Acts 3:1-11). The man immediately stood upright with a leap and was “walking and leaping and praising God.” His healing did not come with any treatment or medication, and it did not require any passage of time. It was also done publicly in front of many witnesses. As Paul later said, these things were not “done in a corner” (Acts 26:26). If such things were done in our day, the internet would be filled with video evidence.

Consider also the gift of speaking in tongues. Early Christians who had this gift miraculously spoke languages they did not know so that others could hear the gospel in their native tongues (see Acts 2:5-11). Those who claim to have this gift today do not speak in this way, but instead they speak incomprehensible gibberish that no one understands.

Most importantly, Scripture tells us why these gifts have ceased. Notice 1 Corinthians 13:8-10:

⁸Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away. ⁹For we know in part and we prophesy in part; ¹⁰but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away.

This passage tells us that the gifts will cease when “the perfect” comes. The question is, “What is ‘the perfect’?” Those who claim to have miraculous gifts today will say that “the perfect” is Jesus, but nothing in this context has to do with Christ’s coming. The context of 1 Corinthians 12-14 is about spiritual gifts. In truth, “the perfect” in this context is in contrast to “the partial.” “The partial” refers to knowledge and prophecy (“we know in part and we prophesy in part”). Therefore, “the perfect” also refers to knowledge and prophecy.

Have the perfect knowledge and prophecy come? The answer is yes. We have them in the Bible. The word of God has been delivered and confirmed, and it requires no further confirmation. Miraculous gifts no longer have their designated purpose, so they have ceased.

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This does not mean that God has ceased to work among us by His providence or that He does not respond to prayer, but rather it is simply that people no longer possess miraculous gifts. Those who still claim to have them are either deceived or else they are deceivers. Whatever they are doing, it is not according to the word of God.

Matthew 7:22-23 – ²²“Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ ²³And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.’”