

DURATION AND PURPOSE OF MIRACLES AND SPIRITUAL GIFTS

1Cor.13:8-13

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. We readily admit that the Bible teaches that miracles and spiritual gifts existed and operated or functioned through human agency during the personal ministry of Jesus, during the time of the Apostles of Christ on earth, and during the time of the early church through Christians who possessed and used spiritual gifts.
2. We deny they exist, operate or function through human agency today; in other words, we deny that men are endowed with such miraculous powers today for any purpose.
3. This raises the question: If so then, why not now?
4. To answer that question by means of the inspired scriptures, the written word, is the very purpose of our present lesson on The Duration And Purpose Of Miracles And Spiritual Gifts.

II. DISCUSSION

A. FIRST TAKE NOTE THAT THE MIRACLES OF N.T. DAYS ARE IDENTIFIED AS “SIGNS, WONDERS, MIGHTY DEEDS (powers, or mighty words)” AND “SPIRITUAL GIFTS”.

1. Examples: Mk.16:;19,20; Jno.20:30,31; Ac.2:22,43; 4:30; 8:13; Rom.15:19; 1Cor.12:1-11; 2Cor.12:12; Heb.2:4.
2. Called “**signs**” because they signified God’s approval of what was taught or practiced in connection with them or of the person working them.
3. Called “**wonders**” because they excited wonder or amazement in those who witnessed them.
4. Called “**mighty deeds**”, “**powers**”, and or “**mighty works**”, because they were wrought by the immediate power of God Almighty through human agency by means of the Holy Spirit.
5. Called “**Spiritual Gifts**” or “**gifts of the Holy Spirit**” because they were given by to certain individual saints by the Holy Spirit by means of the laying on of the Apostles’ hands, 1Cor.12:1-11; Ac.8:14-19; 19:5,6; 2Tim.1:6.

B. THE DURATION OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS, 1Cor.12:1; 13:8-13.

1. They were to cease to exist or to vanish away, 13:8 (Never intended to be permanent).
2. Why were they to cease? 13:9.
 - a. More on this when we set forth the purpose of miracles through human agency and of spiritual gifts through human agency.
3. When were they to cease? 13:10.
4. This teaching illustrated, 13:9-13.
 - a. V.11 corresponds to the time when the church in its **infancy** had these spiritual gifts, before the revelation of God's will was complete; they were to be put away when it reached maturity, Eph.4.
 - b. V.12 corresponds to an imperfect reflection from an imperfect mirror, as to "see through a glass, darkly"; "now" refers to the time when the church had the gifts and knew in "**part**", because the will of God was in the process of being revealed; "**but then**" to when they no longer depended on "**part**" – but when they had the whole, the complete revelation of God's will for man. Cf. Jno.16:13
 - c. V.13 refers not to heaven. For in heaven does not abide; in heaven hope is realized; one is no longer with patience waiting for it; he has realized the object of his hope. Rom.8:24,25.

C. THE PURPOSE OF MIRACLES.

1. To reveal and confirm, Jno.20:30,31 (2:11; 3:1,2; 5:36); Mk.16:19,20; Ac.2:22; Heb.2:3,4; 2Cor.12:12.
2. Once fully revealed and confirmed there is nothing else to be revealed and what has been revealed and confirmed needs not to be re-confirmed, Jno.14:25,26; 15:26,27; 16:7-15; Eph.3:1-5; 1Jno.1:1-5; 2Tim.3:16-4:5; Jude 3; Jas.1:25.

D. THE PURPOSE AND USE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS.

1. 1Cor.12:4-7 (Vv.12-30); 14:1-6,12,31.
2. Cf. with scaffolding used for a house being built.

E. SPIRITUAL GIFTS HAVE PASSED AWAY BECAUSE

1. The need for them has ceased. The need for them for them has ceased because their purpose has been fulfilled.
 - a. Ex. God created 1st pair by miraculous power; but no more. Now by the process of law – the law of procreation.
2. It is a matter of N.T. prophecy, 1Cor.13:8-13.
3. Because the means of obtaining them has ceased – the means being through the laying on the Apostles’ hands. (More on this later in the next lesson on Reasons Spiritual Gifts Have Ceased.

III. CONCLUSION

1. In this study we have noted that miracles were also identified as “signs, wonders, mighty deeds (powers or mighty works), and spiritual gifts and why they were so identified.
2. We have shown from Scripture the divine purpose of miracles and spiritual gifts in the early church.
3. We also have shown from Scripture that “spiritual gifts”:
 - a. Were to cease.
 - b. Why they were to cease.
 - c. When they were to cease.
 - d. Cannot be bestowed upon men today because the means of bestowing them no longer exist.
4. In the next lesson on Reasons Spiritual Gifts Have Ceased, we shall dwell upon the means by which spiritual gifts were given to the saints in N.T. days, to whom this power to bestow the spiritual gifts on other was given, and why that power was limited to them and them alone.