

REASONS SPIRITUAL GIFTS HAVE CEASED

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 individual Christians who possessed and used spiritual gifts to accomplish God's holy purposes for them in that age.
2. However, we deny they exist, operate or function through human agency today; in other words, we deny that men today are endowed with such miraculous powers today for any purpose.
3. This naturally raises the question: If so then, why not now?
4. That question we answered in a previous lesson based on 1Cor.13:8-13 entitled "Duration And Purpose Of Miracles And Spiritual Gifts."
5. In that lesson we proved that spiritual gifts have ceased because:
 - a. They were "in part" and were to "cease" when "that which is perfect is come" ; i.e., when the whole has been revealed, or the whole of God's revelation for men – all the truth promised to man through the Apostles by means of the Holy Spirit (Jno.16:7-15) – had been revealed, 1Cor.13:8-13 – which we now have in the N.T. Cf. 1Jno.1:1-5; 2Tim.3:16,17; Jude 3; Jas.1:25.
 - b. Because spiritual gifts have served their purpose.
6. In that previous lesson we suggested there is a third reason why spiritual gifts have ceased, which is this: The means of obtaining them has ceased to be available.
7. The purpose of this lesson is to identify that means and show why it is no longer available to men.

II. DISCUSSION

A. TO DO THAT, WE MUST START WITH JESUS' PROMISE OF HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM.

1. He made the promise to his chosen Apostles and to them alone, Jno.14:25,26; 16:26,27; 16:7-15; 20:19-23 (Cf. V.24; it was the 12); Lk.24:44-49; Ac.1:1-9.

2. The promise was fulfilled on the 1st Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, Ac.2:1-4, which Peter described as “at the beginning” in Ac.11:15.
3. Saul of Tarsus, who later became the Apostle Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, had the same power, authority and privileges as the other apostles, 2Cor.12:12; Gal.2:6-8; Rom.1:1-5; 1Cor.9:1; 2Cor.11:5; 12:11; Gal.2:11.
4. There is no record of this which is identified as “the promise of the Father”, which Jesus made to the Apostles, according to Luke, in Lk.24:49, and renewed to them, according to Luke, in Ac.1:4,5, but there identified as “the baptism of the Holy Spirit”, or as there recorded, “but wait for the promise of the Father, which...ye (ye Apostles) have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye (ye Apostles) shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence” ever being made to anyone else.
 - a. It was a promise made the Apostles of Jesus – to them and only to them.
 - b. If promised to anyone else, where is the record of it?
 - c. What right do we have to extend that promise to others?

B. THINGS THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT ENABLED OR EMPOWERED THEM TO RECEIVE AND TO DO WHICH OTHERS WHERE NOT SO ENABLED OR EMPOWERED.

1. To receive God’s will – his saving message – the original message of the gospel of Christ – directly from heaven – i.e., through no human messengers, but directly from the Lord by means of the Holy Spirit, Jno.16:13,14; Ac.2:1-4; Gal.1:11,12; Eph.3:1-5; Cf. 2Pet.1:20,21; Lk.1:1-4; Heb.2:1-4; Rom.10:11-15.
2. To impart “the gift of the Holy Spirit”, or “spiritual gifts” to baptized believers by means of the laying on of their hands, Ac.8:14-19; 19:5,6; Rom.1:11; Gal.3:1-5; 2Tim.1:6.
3. Others, even though they possessed “spiritual gifts” through the laying on of the Apostles’ hands could not impart such gifts to another, as we shall see.
4. Even Cornelius who had received miraculously (through no human medium) “the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Ac.10:45) did not receive “the baptism of the Holy Spirit”, nor the power to lay hands of anyone and impart “spiritual gifts” to them. (Remember: The promise of Holy Spirit Baptism was made to the Apostles only.)

C. ALL OTHER BAPTIZED BELIEVERS WHO RECEIVED THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (OR SPIRITUAL GIFTS) RECEIVED THEM, NOT DIRECTLY FROM HEAVEN BY MEANS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, BUT BY THE LAYING ON OF THE APOSTLES' HANDS, WHERE NOT EMPOWERED TO IMPART SUCH GIFTS TO OTHERS.

1. Philip, the Evangelist, and the Samaritans are proof of this, Ac.6:1-8; 8:5-19.
 - a. Considering the powers Philip had, why didn't he impart "the gift of the Holy Spirit" to them? He didn't have that power? Only the Apostles had such power!
 - b. This also proves that the baptized believer does not receive "the gift of the Holy Spirit" at the very point of baptism for the remission of sins, as some claim Ac.2:38 teaches.
 - c. Compare Ac.2:38 with Ac.8:14-17.
 - d. See and compare Ac.2:38 with Ac.10:44-46 to see what "the gift of the Holy Spirit" is.
2. If such gifts of the Spirit could have been received some other way, why do we not have passages other than Ac.8:14-19; 19:5,6; Rom.1:11; 2Tim.1:6 telling us about it?
 - a. Remember: Peter says, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God..." 1Pet.4:11; Cf. 1Cor.4:6; Rev.22:18,19.

III. CONCLUSION

1. Finally, since only the Apostles had the power of the Holy Spirit given them by the Lord to impart "spiritual gifts" to baptized believer;
2. And since all the Apostles of Christ are long since dead and therefore can no longer lay hands on anyone to impart "spiritual gifts" to them;
3. Miraculous Spiritual gifts, therefore, have ceased because the means of obtaining them has ceased to be available!