

DO MIRACLES STILL HAPPEN TODAY?

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1 Cor. 13:8-13 is very important as it relates to the widespread claim of some to be able to perform modern day miracles. The determination as to whether or not those that claim to have spiritual gifts are honest in their claims depends heavily on verse ten. We have to be able to identify “that which is perfect.” Is it with us now, or is it to come when the Lord returns the second time? The Pentecostal movement and its adherents demand that “that which is perfect” has not yet come. As we examine this passage, we will notice that it does give us the information concerning the time frame of the coming of “that which is perfect.”

No denial is being made that the New Testament and much of the Old Testament have many instances of miracles being presented. Moses, Elijah, and Elisha’s use of the miraculous is well documented in the pages of the Old Testament. Jesus foretold of the miraculous endowment that would come from the Holy Spirit to the apostles (Mk. 16:17-18). The use of the miraculous has been verified in the scripture (Mark 16:20; Acts 2:1-4,43; 8:6; 10:44-46; 14:3; Heb. 2:3-4...). So it is not a question of **if** miracles happened but **when** they happened. Brother Gary Workman stated:

Paul then discusses further some of “the greater gifts” as he contrasts them with love as their superior (1 Cor.12:31--13:7). He singles out tongues, prophecy, (inspired) knowledge and (supernatural) faith. Three of these gifts (representing all of them) are further contrasted with the representative Christian virtues of faith, hope, and love (1 Cor. 13:8-13). The contrast has to do with their duration. As long as this earth shall last, faith, hope, and love will abide (1 Cor. 13:13) whereas spiritual gifts such as those producing “prophecies,” “tongues,” and “knowledge” would “cease” or “be done away” (1 Cor. 13:8). The termination of the gifts would be “when that which is perfect is come” (1 Cor. 13:10) (Shertz Lectures, 1982, pg. 93).

We need to determine what “perfect” does not mean: “perfect” does not refer to Jesus. The structure of the Greek sentence will not allow for this interpretation. The word “perfect” is neuter and cannot refer to a mature Jesus. It can and does refer to infants or children, so Jesus, at birth, would have been referred to as the “Holy Thing.” But as an adult, He is not a “thing” but a “who” (Strong’s Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries). Also, the context of the scripture does not allow for the “perfect” to be our existence in heaven one day if we are found faithful in the end. The “perfect” cannot refer to Christian perfection either, for that is something that we will always strive to reach while we live in earthly bodies.

What does “perfect” mean? The Greek word translated “perfect” (teleios) means “having attained the end or purpose, complete” (Strong’s Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries). It can refer to anything that has been brought to its end. We ask the question, “What is under consideration of being complete?” In verse nine, both of the words “know” and “prophecy” are modified by the adverbial phrase “in part.” In verse ten, those verbs are brought together and modified by the phrase “that which is in part,” so that which is “in part” in verse nine is the same thing that is described by “that which is in part” in verse ten, which is miraculous knowledge and prophecy.

The miraculous was just part of the revelation process, was never intended to continue, and was in place to prove, to the listeners, the prophet was from God. The words “in part” reference inspired

preaching and the use of “spiritual gifts” or miracles. When that which was “perfect” came (the totality of the New Testament), then miracles would and did cease.

The miraculous age was put into place by God in order to get the early church to the time of the New Testament’s completion. That which was perfect came when the apostle John completed the Revelation (Rev. 22:18-21), and Jude said, referring to the scripture, that it was “once delivered” (Jude 3). The miraculous is not needed today because we have the whole of the Bible. It is the Word which produces faith in the Christian today, not a miracle (Rom. 10:17).