

1 CORINTHIANS 13

Teacher: John M. Brown, Olive Hill Church of Christ, Sunday Bible Class, August 2012

INTRODUCTION: This chapter concerns two things: LOVE and the DURATION OF MIRACULOUS GIFTS. First, consider Paul's teaching about love:

LOVE = **AGAPE** (the highest form of love; not friendship or romantic love, but a genuine caring and unselfish concern for another's good).

I. THE SUPREMACY OF LOVE OVER MIRACULOUS GIFTS, 13:1-3

- A. Apparently, the Corinthians became proud and self-righteous because of possessing miraculous gifts; these gifts had become overly important, to the exclusion or neglect of brotherly love.
- B. Paul contrasts these gifts with CHARITY (love): it is most important!
 - 1. "Sounding brass": this is not a musical instrument, but rather a piece of rough metal which of course rings a dull sound when struck.
 - 2. "Tinkling cymbal": 1st century cymbals consisted of two metal globes struck together.
- C. PAUL'S POINT: Without love, miraculous tongues is useless noise (Amos 5:21-23).

II. LOVE DEFINED, 13:4-7

- A. SUFFERETH LONG = long-suffering; patient; enduring
- B. KIND = good, gracious, gentle, "big-hearted"
- C. ENVIETH NOT = is not jealous
- D. VAUNTETH NOT ITSELF = is not boastful; not bragging
- E. IS NOT PUFFED UP = not arrogant, prideful, vain; doesn't feel superior to others; humble
- F. DOTH NOT BEHAVE ITSELF UNSEEMLY = rude, indecent; love is well-mannered
- G. SEEKETH NOT HER OWN = does not insist on its own way; unselfish
- H. IS NOT EASILY PROVOKED = not irritable; even tempered
- I. THINKETH NO EVIL = not resentful; doesn't return evil for evil or hold grudges, but forgives
- J. REJOICETH NOT IN INIQUITY = doesn't rejoice at wrong; sin is no occasion for rejoicing
- K. REJOICETH IN THE TRUTH = love is truthful and rejoices in right
- L. BEARS ALL THINGS = love endures, forbears
- M. BELIEVETH ALL THINGS = not suspicious; trusting
- N. HOPETH ALL THINGS = optimistic rather than gloomy and despairing
- O. ENDURETH ALL THINGS = enduring the assaults of suffering and persecution
- P. LOVE NEVER FAILETH = enduring (1 John 4:16)

III. THE TEMPORARY NATURE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS, 13:8-13

- A. When shall brotherly love fail? NEVER

B. But what about miraculous gifts?

1. "Prophecies" - "they shall fail" ("be abolished; be done away")
2. "Tongues" = "they shall cease" ("stop; make an end")
3. "Knowledge" = "it shall vanish away" ("to abolish; to fail")

C. When? "*But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.*"

"PERFECT"

"IN PART"

Greek, "TELEIOS"

Greek, "EK MEROUS"

"signifies having reached its end, finished, complete...of things complete"

"in part; partial; incomplete; portion of whole"

(VINE'S Expository Dictionary)

"brought to its end, finished; wanting nothing necessary to completeness...of full age, mature"

(THAYER, Greek-English Lexicon)

COMPLETE - MATURE

INCOMPLETE - PARTIAL

Paul is here differentiating between that which is *temporary or partial or incomplete*
IN CONTRAST to that which is *permanent, complete, and mature.*

D. The meaning of "that which is perfect":

1. *God's completed revelation to man:* remember 1st Christians had the message of God revealed gradually; but the time would come when that message would be completed.
 - a. Remember the meaning of the word "perfect" (complete, mature).
 - b. Miraculous signs were for the purpose of confirming the truthfulness of the message (see Mark 16:17-20; Hebrews 2:3-4).
 - c. Once God's complete, final message had been given and confirmed, then the need for these temporary gifts would cease.
 - d. Note Paul's illustration in verses 11-12

CHILD vs. MAN

SEE THROUGH A GLASS vs. FACE TO FACE

KNOW IN PART vs. THEN SHALL I KNOW

2. Compare these Scriptures: Psalm 19:7; James 1:25; 2 Timothy 3:16-17

E. CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING COMPARISON:

1 Corinthians 13:8-12

Ephesians 4:7-15

- a. Gifts
- b. To pass away
- c. Cease when perfect comes
- d. Then have complete knowledge
- e. Church a child before fulfillment
- f. Church a mature man when gifts cease

- a. Gifts
- b. To be done away
- c. End when come to unity of faith
- d. Then have complete knowledge
- e. Church a child before fulfillment
- f. Church a mature man when gifts cease

MIRACULOUS GIFTS of the APOSTOLIC AGE OF THE CHURCH

Study by John M. Brown, Olive Hill Church of Christ

I. THE PURPOSE OF MIRACULOUS GIFTS:

1. Mark 1:32-38
2. Mark 2:8-10
3. Matthew 11:20-24
4. John 9:1-12
5. John 10:31-32
6. John 11:14 ff.
7. John 20:30-31
8. Acts 2:22
9. Mark 16:15-20
10. Hebrews 2:3-4
11. 2 Corinthians 12:12

II. THE DURATION OF MIRACULOUS GIFTS: Miraculous Signs Have Ceased!

1. Their end was foretold - 1 Corinthians 13:8 ff.

(That their end has come is evidenced by the fact that they are not being done)

2. Their purpose has been fulfilled - Mark 16:20

(We have the completed Word, 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3)

3. The way miraculous power was given is gone - Acts 14:1-3; 8:18; 19:6

(There are no apostles today laying hands on anyone)

4. No one demonstrates such signs today (read Deuteronomy 13:1-5; 2 Corinthians 11:13-15; 2 Thessalonians 2:8-12).

CONCLUSION:

A. The Bible teaches that when the completed revelation of God was given to man (as it was in the 1st century) miraculous signs would cease.

B. This is in complete harmony with the fact that such signs are not in evidence today (regardless of claims made).