

God's Plan of Salvation:

1. Hear - Romans 10:17
2. Believe - Mark 16:16
3. Repent - Acts 2:38
4. Confess - Romans 10:10
5. Be baptized - Acts 22:16
6. Live faithfully - Revelation 2:10

Announcements:

Sick: Mrs. Calvert, Mrs. Douglas, Mr. Douglas' mother, Mr. and Mrs. Hadley, Mrs. Kelly Hall, Mrs. Elizabeth Jackson, Ms. Kim (Ashley Law's mother), Lamar Mathis, Mrs. Pete Newsome, Mrs. Siota, Mr. Winns.
Out of Town: Jared Law and family.

If you would be interested in any of the following ways to study the Bible, feel free to let us know:

- Home Bible Study - We will come into your home or other place you feel comfortable and study the Bible with you. Bible questions are welcome in these studies and we will seek to give a Bible answer.
- Correspondence courses - We will be glad to mail you a correspondence lesson that you can fill out and mail back to us and we will send you the next lesson.
- Call us with your Bible question - #503-707-6014.
- Visit our website:
www.oakgrovechurchofchristjenningsflorida.com.
- Come and visit - We always strive to have good, practical Bible instruction at each of our assemblies.

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Spiritual Gifts - Part 3

By Derek Long

In the last couple of articles, we have examined the fact the Holy Spirit gave men the ability to possess miraculous spiritual gifts and the purpose behind these miraculous spiritual gifts. A question which is of great interest to many is: Do we still have people who possess miraculous spiritual gifts today? Have miraculous spiritual gifts ceased to be in existence? Let's turn our attention to some Bible passages which will help us in determining the answer to these questions.

Acts 8:14-19

The situation in Acts 8 is the disciples who were at Jerusalem were being scattered due to the persecution being brought by Saul and probably others (Acts 8:1-3). As these disciples went to different places they were preaching the word of God (Acts 8:4). Acts 8 focuses on the teaching of Philip. Philip was one of the seven selected to serve tables and make sure the needy widows were being ministered to (Acts 6:1-6). He goes and teaches people in Samaria (Acts 8:5-25) and will later teach the Ethiopian treasurer (Acts 8:26-40).

Philip goes to Samaria and "preached Christ to them" (Acts 8:5) and "preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 8:12). As Philip is preaching, the message he was preaching was being confirmed by the miraculous things the Holy Spirit enabled Philip to do. For example, Acts 8:6-7 says, "And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed." Philip had the ability to work miracles and teach others the gospel. People in Samaria believed and were baptized (Acts 8:12-13) and thus were saved (Mark 16:16). Yet we are told, "the Holy Spirit had fallen

upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 8:16).

The apostles in Jerusalem learn what had taken place in Samaria and send Peter and John to them (Acts 8:14). Peter and John come and “prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit” (Acts 8:15) and “they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit” (Acts 8:17). Simon, who previously had practiced sorcery, seeing what the apostles’ were able to do said, “Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit” (Acts 8:19). Simon “saw that through the laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Spirit was given.” Therefore, we learn the only way for miraculous spiritual gifts to be imparted was through the laying on of the apostles’ hands.

In order for someone to be qualified to be an apostle, it was necessary for them to be an eyewitness of the resurrected Lord (Acts 1:21-22). Paul gives us a list of various resurrection appearances of Jesus and says, “Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time” (1 Corinthians 15:8). The last person the resurrected Christ appeared to was Paul. Therefore, since we have no one alive today who is an eyewitness of the resurrected Lord, we have no living apostles upon the earth today. If we have no living apostles on the earth today, there is no one who has the ability to impart miraculous spiritual gifts by the laying on of their hands. When the apostles and those who had received the Holy Spirit by the laying on of the apostles’ hands died, it is evident miraculous spiritual gifts ceased to be in existence.

1 Corinthians 13:8-13

1 Corinthians 12 ends by saying there is something better than the best spiritual gifts a person could hope to have (1 Corinthians 12:31). The “more excellent way” would be to have “love” (1 Corinthians 13:1-7). Love is greater than miraculous spiritual gifts because “Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away” (1 Corinthians 13:8). Love is going to be more permanent than the spiritual gifts is Paul’s point in verse 8. 1 Corinthians 13:8 clearly teach a time will come when spiritual gifts such as prophecies, tongues, and knowledge will no longer exist. It is not meaning there will not be languages but the miraculous ability to speak in a language you have never studied will be done away with. It does not mean all knowledge will be lost but rather there will no longer be miraculously imparted knowledge. The question many people might have is: When will these spiritual gifts be done away with?

1 Corinthians 13:9 describes the present situation Paul and the Corinthians found themselves in when the letter was written. It says, “For we know in part and we prophecy in part.” Their knowledge was limited because God had not yet revealed all truth through the Holy Spirit to them. They were still receiving God’s will through means such as prophecy but all revelation had not been given yet. 1 Corinthians 13:10 says, “But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.” When 1 Corinthians is written they have things “in part” but a time was coming when they will not have things “in part.” Instead, they would have “that which is perfect.” The word “perfect” in 1 Corinthians 13:10 refers to that which is “complete.” It is as though God was giving them pieces to the puzzle as He inspired men to write the various books of the New Testament. Eventually, they would have the perfect or the completed puzzle. Once they had the perfect or completed puzzle there would be no need for the miraculous spiritual gifts to continue to exist. The spiritual gifts would have served their function at this point. 1 Corinthians 13:11-12 compares the time of spiritual gifts to the time of childhood or to looking in a mirror. It is expected that as one grows childish things be removed. In a similar manner, it is expected that once God’s complete revelation has been given spiritual gifts will be done away. It is far better to see face than in a mirror. The time of spiritual gifts allowed people to see themselves like in a mirror. Once the completed revelation of God’s word is given we are now able to see ourselves exactly as God sees us (James 1:22-25; Hebrews 4:12-13).

Conclusion

Instead of longing for spiritual gifts, which were given to the church to help in its time of infancy. Let’s be grateful we have God’s completed revelation! Let’s remember the word of God supplies us with all we need to be what God would have us to be in service to Him (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3)!