

When That Which Is Perfect Has Come

1 Corinthians 13:8-13

Introduction

- A. This passage has been a source of debate for centuries
 - 1. Used by some religious groups to prove the unlimited use of miraculous “spiritual gifts”, used by others to say that they have ceased
- B. What is this passage really saying?
 - 1. We do not need to be confused about this passage, we can know exactly what Paul is saying here
 - 2. Let's look at it, define what its context is, then determine its meaning
 - 3. But first, we should understand some things

I. The Purpose of Miracles

- A. God has used supernatural events throughout time to show man that He is the One behind the events - **Exodus 6:6-7 - Exodus 7:5 - Exodus 7:17**
- B. We have many Old Testament events showing the mighty hand of God:
 - 1. The flood
 - 2. Confused language at Babel
 - 3. Plagues of Egypt
 - 4. The fall of Jericho
 - 5. Those three guys in the fiery furnace --- and on and on.....
- C. God worked the same way when the good news of Jesus began to be told - Mark 16:15-20
 - 1. All the things that Jesus said were fulfilled by the apostles - Hebrews 2:1-4
 - 2. How do we KNOW this happened? We can read about it - Acts 8:4-8
 - a. How was Philip able to do these signs?

II. Gifts of the Holy Spirit

- A. How were they given?
 - 1. The only way that the gifts of the Holy Spirit were passed on was by the direct laying on of the apostles hands - **Acts 8:14-18 - Acts 19:6 - Romans 1:11 - 2 Timothy 1:5-6**
- B. What was their purpose?
 - 1. To bring people to faith in Christ - **1 Corinthians 2:4-5**
 - 2. To edify the church - **1 Corinthians 14:12 - 1 Corinthians 14:26**

III. Miraculous Gifts Will Cease

- A. Verse 8 explicitly states there will be a time when they will “FAIL,” “CEASE,” “VANISH” ---- All will be “done away”.
 - 1. In other words this means rendered inoperative
 - 2. Prophecy, tongues, & knowledge all relate to the same thing - Divine revelation from God for our benefit
- B. The question is: When will they “be done away?”
 - 1. Verses 9-10 says “When that which is perfect has come...”
 - a. The “perfect” - Greek - ‘teleios’ - that which grows to completeness or wholeness
 - b. The “perfect” could not be Jesus - because it violates the context: “When that which is perfect has come...” - He has already come to this earth and He is never referred to as a “THAT.”

- C. Jesus promised that there would be full or complete truth - **John 16:13**
 - 1. The apostles received the Spirit on Pentecost & by His power spoke the word & confirmed it by miracles

- D. Verse 11 - Paul's analogy of the child to a man
 - 1. He compares partial knowledge to childish things
 - a. Children need help as they grow
 - b. God has given us help so we can grow - **Ephesians 4:11-16**

- E. We can also look into it & know - **James 1:25**
 - 1. We are blessed because the perfect law tells us all we need to know about living & pleasing God - **2 Peter 1:2-3 - 2 Timothy 3:16-17**
 - 2. The ultimate purpose of the revelation of God & the miraculous signs confirming it are summed up by John - **John 20:30-31**

- F. Verse 13 - What will abide?
 - 1. Faith and hope, like miraculous gifts & signs, will one day no longer be needed
 - a. Our faith & hope will be realized when we are with Him
 - b. But love will continue forever
 - c. Until then, we need faith, which comes by His Word, and gives us hope by what it tells us
 - 2. The promise of revelation was followed by the means of revelation, now we have the perfect, complete record of revelation

Conclusion

- A. God has given us His will and confirmed it by the signs
- B. Now that the Word is complete & perfect, we no longer need any miraculous proof. He Himself has confirmed it
- C. He tells us exactly what it takes to receive His gift & live a life that results in our salvation
- D. Invitation

Material gathered from Outlines on the Web