

## Miraculous Gifts of the Spirit: Does He Give Them Today?

Franklin Church of Christ  
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AM Worship

### Introduction:

Several years ago, I had a couple of Bible studies with a man who claimed the Holy Spirit granted members of his church miraculous gifts. I learned one very sad fact from that man. This individual was a go-getter in his church. One of his goals was to study with as many people as possible to convince them that the Holy Spirit was really moving miraculously within his church. Though he had studied the issue of modern miraculous gifts with dozens of people, he claimed that almost no one he had studied with knew what they really believed on the issue or why they believed it. It is no wonder then that numerous churches of all brands, faiths and sizes are experiencing turmoil regarding this issue. Most people hold a position on this issue out of tradition, without knowing what the Bible really says. Regrettably, this is one of those issues about which even many of our brethren are scared. They see the Holy Spirit give miraculous gifts in the Bible, they see preachers claim they are not for today—but they do not know why? They want to hold the “party line”—so they just avoid discussing this issue. But we are not to hold party lines. We are not to believe just what we have always believed. We are to believe what the Bible says. We must not be afraid to examine the scriptures on any issue. If we are wrong, we need to change. If we are right, then we need to be strengthened. What is the answer?

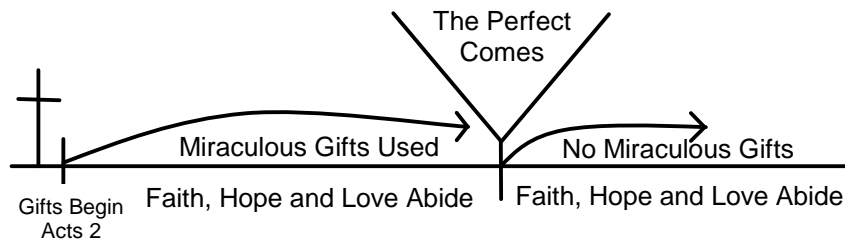
### Discussion:

- I. Before we begin, we must understand two preliminary points.
  - A. First, we must understand our question. We are not asking what the Holy Spirit can do. The Holy Spirit, being divine, can do anything He pleases. Additionally, we are not asking what we should do. For all our toiling and trying, we could never do anything miraculous unless the Holy Spirit granted the power. We are asking, “What does the Holy Spirit do?” Does the Holy Spirit still grant miraculous gifts to God’s children today?
  - B. Second, we must understand how to answer this question. We cannot answer this question based on experiences and feelings. **Matthew 7:21-23** presents people with very strong experiences and very strong feelings. However, the Lord claimed He *never* knew them. I do not know what their experiences were, but their experiences had misled them. Jesus had never known them; they had never actually done what they thought they did. On the other hand, **Acts 19:1-7** presents men who had never had any experiences with miraculous spiritual gifts, such that they did not even know that there was a Holy Spirit. However, their lack of experiences proved nothing. We can only answer this question based on the clear revelation from God—the Scripture (**II Timothy 3:16-17**). Whatever our experiences, or lack thereof, we must answer this question from scripture and then apply the scripture to our experiences.
- II. To begin answering, we must understand the purpose of the miraculous gifts of the Spirit.
  - A. The Holy Spirit used miraculous gifts for three purposes.
    1. According to **John 16:12-13**, the Holy Spirit used these gifts to reveal the will of God.
    2. According to **Hebrews 2:2-4**, the Holy Spirit used these gifts to confirm that the will of God was what was being taught.
    3. In **I Corinthians 14:1-6**, the Holy Spirit used these gifts to edify and convict.
  - B. Please note that the gifts were never used for entertainment, monetary gain or emotional fulfillment. Also note, that the gifts were not even used for the purpose of healing. Though one of the gifts was healing, the purpose was still to confirm that God’s will was being taught. Note in **II Timothy 4:20**, Paul left Trophimus sick in Miletus. Why did he not just heal him? Because the purpose of the gift of healing was not really about healing.
  - C. Additionally, note that the Scriptures claim the Spirit would only use these miraculous gifts for a time. In **I Corinthians 13:8-10**, we learn that when that which is perfect is come, the Holy Spirit will no longer use miraculous gifts to reveal, confirm, edify and convict.
- III. We must understand the *part* and the *perfect* in **I Corinthians 13:8-13**.
  - A. What did Paul mean by *perfect*? The typical answer given today is that *perfect* means *sinless*.
  - B. If *perfect* means *sinless*, then what does *in part* mean? *In part* means *not perfect* or *sinful*.

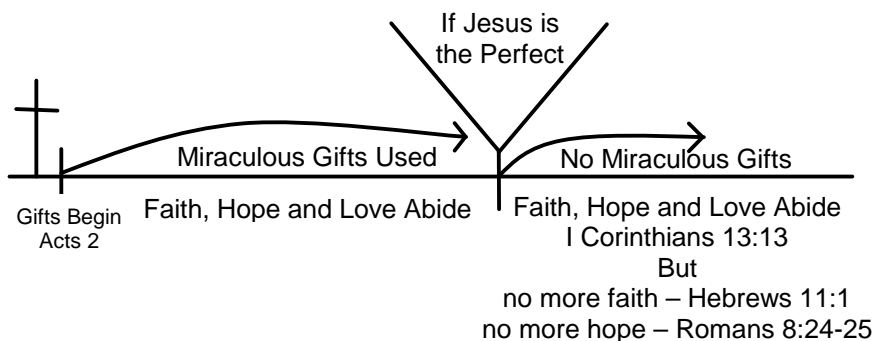
- C. But what did Paul say was *in part*? Paul said the miraculous gifts were *in part*.
- D. Are the miraculous gifts of the Spirit sinful? Certainly not. God does not sin, nor does He tempt others to sin (**James 1:13**). Therefore, our whole foundation for this series of questions must be incorrect. Since that which is *in part* is not referring to sinfulness, then that which is *perfect* is not referring to sinlessness.
- E. What then is the point of the *part* and the *perfect*? The *part* is exactly that, something that is partial or only partially accomplishes the task. While the *perfect*, being contrasted with the *partial* is that which is whole and complete or fully accomplishes the task.

IV. We must understand what the *perfect* is.

- A. From **I Corinthians 13:8-13**, we learn that miraculous spiritual gifts would cease when the perfect comes. Love, however, never fails; continuing even after the perfect comes (**vs. 8**). Additionally, faith and hope will also abide when miraculous gifts have ceased (**vs. 13**). The following chart presents a picture of what this passage teaches:



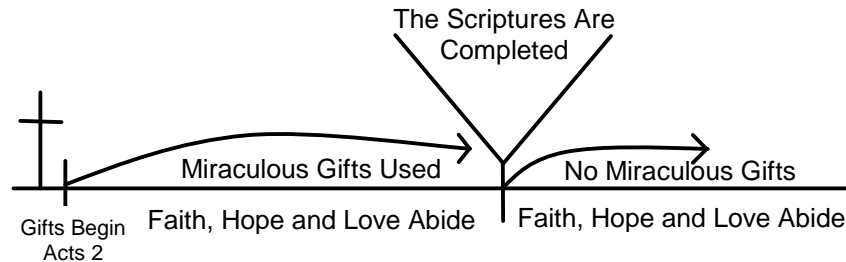
- B. What is the *perfect*? Some say, "Jesus." However, this makes the Bible contradict itself.
  1. While **I Corinthians 13:13** maintains that after the perfect comes, faith will still abide, **Hebrews 11:1** demonstrates that faith will no longer abide after Jesus returns. Faith is about that which is unseen. We have faith now, because we do not see Jesus or heaven. But when Jesus returns, we will no longer walk by faith, but by sight.
  2. Additionally, while **I Corinthians 13:13** maintains that hope will still abide after the perfect has come, **Romans 8:24-25** demonstrates that hope will no longer abide after Jesus returns. Again, hope is the expectation of that which is unseen. Once we see Jesus and are in heaven with Him, we will no longer abide in hope, but in sight.
  3. Do you see the contradiction? Consider the following chart which represents the combined teaching of these three passages if Jesus is assumed to be the perfect:



- 4. Since the Bible never contradicts itself, for God is not the author of confusion (**I Corinthians 14:33**), Paul must not have been referring to Jesus when he spoke of that which is perfect.
- C. If Jesus is not the *perfect* about which Paul was speaking, then what is?
  1. Go back to our understanding of the *part* and the *perfect*. The *perfect* is that which is whole or complete, which completely and wholly accomplishes the task that the *part* only accomplished partially. First, answer a very simple question. If I gave you a part of an apple

pie, what is the whole? Apple pie. Thus, if the *part* is that which reveals, confirms, edifies and convicts, the *perfect*, is that which reveals, confirms, edifies and convicts wholly.

2. What reveals, confirms, edifies and convicts, wholly and completely preparing us for every good work? **II Timothy 3:16-17** is clear, God's holy scriptures, once completed, reveals, confirms, edifies and convicts us of every good work and will make us complete.
3. If we go back to our chart and picture what these passages say together, we will not find a contradiction. Because, even when following what is written, we are still walking by faith and we are still walking in hope, because we still do not see. Note the following chart:



V. We must understand our conclusion.

- A. Since the Holy Scriptures have been completed, the perfect has come. That which was in part has been done away. Paul used two illustrations to explain what this means for the church.
  1. In **I Corinthians 13:11**, Paul related this to childhood and maturity. A child speaks, understands and thinks as a child. The one who grows up must put those childish things away. The church, in its infancy needed the support of the miraculous gifts. However, once the Spirit had revealed all that the church needed, the church would put away the childish things and grow up. Amazingly, people today who are banking on the direct operation of the Holy Spirit in their lives, typically believe they are more spiritually mature. But the scripture says that the church, in its maturity, has the fullness of the Spirit's revelation in the scripture. We must not try to go back to the church's childhood.
  2. In **I Corinthians 13:12**, Paul related it to being able to see clearly versus dimly. The mirrors of Paul's day were more like shiny hubcaps than our modern mirrors. When you looked into their mirrors, you saw an image, but it was unclear and distorted. Paul said they could only see dimly during the time of miraculous gifts. However, when the Spirit had finally revealed all that was needed, the brethren would see clearly. They could examine God's will and know it fully. Why would the church want to go back to something that was unclear and in part when we have the whole thing now? Despite what we sometimes think, modern Christians have it better than those who were relying on miraculous gifts.
- B. But some today will claim that there is no way scripture can edify and convict better than miracles. Take note of **Luke 16:27-31**. In the story of Lazarus and the rich man, the rich man wanted a miracle to convince his brothers to do right. But Abraham said, "If they will not believe the scriptures, they will not believe even if they see a miracle." Scripture is more powerful than miracles. We must simply learn and use the scriptures.

**Conclusion:**

To sum up, the Holy Spirit granted miraculous gifts for a time. But when He had revealed all that we needed, He no longer used the miraculous gifts. Rather, He used and continues to use that completed revelation—the Bible. I do not know what experiences you may have had. I am not even going to begin to explain them. However, if you have had experiences that have led you to believe the Holy Spirit is granting miraculous gifts to you or to other people today, remember the people of **Matthew 7:21-23**. Do not allow your experiences to define the Bible, allow the Bible to define your experiences. Miraculous gifts of the Spirit are not for today. The church has grown up. We can see clearly now. What a great and awesome God we have who has done this great thing to help us go to heaven.