

# “When That Which Is Perfect Has Come”

## 1 Corinthians 13:8-13

### Introduction

1. **This passage has been a source of debate for centuries.**
  - A. **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 Corinthians 13:8-13**
    - 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.**

### The Purpose of Miracles

1. **God has used supernatural events throughout time to show man that He is the One behind the events.**

*Exod 6:6-7 "Therefore say to the children of Israel: 'I am the LORD; I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. I will take you as My people, and I will be your God. **Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God** who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.*

*Exod 7:5 "And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, **when I stretch out My hand** on Egypt and bring out the children of Israel from among them."*

*Exod 7:17 'Thus says the LORD: "By this you shall know that I am the LORD. Behold, **I will strike the waters which are in the river with the rod that is in my hand, and they shall be turned to blood.***

2. **We have many Old Testament events showing the mighty hand of God:**
  - A. **The flood**
  - B. **Confused language at Babel**
  - C. **Plagues of Egypt**
  - D. **The fall of Jericho**
  - E. **Those three guys in the fiery furnace --- and on and on.....**
  
3. **God worked the same way when the good news of Jesus began to be told.**

**Mark 16:15-20**

  - A. **All the things that Jesus said were fulfilled by the apostles.**  
**Hebrews 2:1-4**
  - B. **How do we KNOW this happened? We can read about it.**  
**Acts 8:4-8**
  - C. **How was Philip able to do these signs?**

## **Gifts of the Holy Spirit**

1. **How were they given?**
  - A. **The only way that the gifts of the Holy Spirit were passed on was by the direct laying on of the **apostles** hands.**
    - 1) **Acts 8:14-18**
    - 2) **Acts 19:6** And *when Paul had laid hands on them*, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.
    - 3) **Rom 1:11** For I long to see you, *that I may impart to you some spiritual gift*, so that you may be established—
    - 4) **2 Tim 1:5-6** *when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also. Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.*

**B. What was their purpose?****1) To bring people to faith in Christ**

1 Cor 2:4-5 *And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.*

**2) To edify the church**

1 Cor 14:12 *Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel.*

1 Cor 14:26 *How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.*

**Miraculous Gifts Will Cease**

**1. Verse 8 explicitly states there will be a time when they will “FAIL,” “CEASE,” “VANISH” ---- All will be “done away”. (Rendered inoperative)**

**A. 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?”**

2. **Verses 9-10 says “When that which is perfect has come...”**  
**Read from the chart**

- A. The **“perfect”** (Gr: ‘teleios’ that which grows to completeness or wholeness) must be of the same nature as the **“partial”**.
- 1) If part is of the pecan pie, then the perfect (whole or complete) is the pecan pie.
  - 2) 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.”**
- B. **“know/prophesy in part”** denotes receiving divine revelation from God. The **“perfect”**, or complete, would have to be the same as the **“partial”**: Knowledge.
- C. Jesus promised that there would be full or complete truth.

John 16:13 "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will **guide you into all truth.....”**

**2 Peter 1:2-3**

- 1) The apostles received the Spirit on Pentecost & by His power spoke the word & confirmed it by miracles.

3. **Verse 11 has Paul’s analogy of - Child to man**  
**Read from the chart**

- A. He compares partial knowledge to childish things.
- 1) Children need help as they grow.
  - 2) God has given us help so we can grow.  
**Ephesians 4:11-16**

**4. Verse 12 The mirror**  
**Read from the chart**

**A. These that Paul wrote to were only seeing a dim outline of God's perfect will.**

- 1) But he promises that they will be able to know it fully.**
- 2) We can also look into it & know**

*James 1:25 But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer **but a doer of the work**, this one will be blessed in what he does.*

**B. We are blessed because the perfect law tells us all we need to know about living & pleasing God.**

*2 Pet 1:2-3 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power **has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness**, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,*

**2 Timothy 3:16-17**

**C. The ultimate purpose of the revelation of God & the miraculous signs confirming it are summed up by John.**

*John 20:30-31 And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but **these are written that you may believe** that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.*

**5. Verse 13 - What will abide?**

**Read from the chart**

- A. Faith and hope, like miraculous gifts & signs, will one day no longer be needed.**
  - 1) Our faith & hope will be realized when we are with Him.
  - 2) But love will continue forever (*Vs 8 "Love never fails"*)
  - 3) Until then, we need faith, which comes by His Word, and gives us hope by what it tells us.
  
- B. The promise of revelation (*John 16:13*) was followed by the means of revelation (*Mark 16:20, Heb 2:3-4*), now we have the perfect, complete record of revelation (*2 Tim 3:16-17, 2 Pet 1:2-3*).**

**Conclusion**

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

**Invitation**

<b>Place</b>		<b>Date</b>	

When That Which Is Perfect Has Come.wpd  
Richard Thetford, August 2000 (Based on an outline by Zeke Flores)