

Exposé 1 Corinthians

Chapter 13

by Bruce Woolard



Although all Scripture is “God breathed” and beautifully phrased the most eloquent chapter in the Bible is 1 Corinthians 13.

The Corinthians lacked the quintessential quality of spirituality, they were carnal and self-absorbed (**1 Corinthians 3:1-3** *“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.”*). They were attracted to spiritual gifts because they supposed it would add to their popularity and superiority. It is ironic that modern day charismatics are obsessed with Scripture which was designed to reveal the danger of ego and the false use of gifts. These gifts become the very thing that they pursue. Having been a Pastor in the Pente-Charismatic Movement for many years (by God’s Grace I was set free from its deception), I witnessed the impact that so called “spiritual” experience had on people who clamoured for showy “gifts”.

The context and exegesis of 1 Corinthians 13 reveals that the sign gifts of faith healing, tongues, prophecy (foretelling) and revelatory knowledge were never designed to exceed or continue after the Bible of 66 books was complete.

The Office of apostle and prophet was necessary to reveal truth before the closure of Scripture. When the Bible was complete these offices and sign gifts had fulfilled their purpose—**1 Corinthians 13:8-9** *“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. For we know in part and we prophesy in part.”*

Love never fails, but the sign gifts will become void. Do spiritual gifts function today? Indeed they do, but not the sign gifts.

Can God heal today? Yes through Divine healing, not through the gift of healing. Paul's thorn in the flesh is a prime example of the apostle not claiming the power to heal yet there was a time in his early ministry that such a gift was prevalent but as the latter epistles reveal, the sign gifts dissipated.

1 Timothy 5:23 *"No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities."*

2 Timothy 4:20 *"Erastus stayed in Corinth, but Trophimus I have left in Miletus sick."*

Why didn't Paul heal Timothy and Trophimus it's obvious that faith healing as a sign gift, had ceased.

The context of **1 Corinthians 13:10-12** *"But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. or now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known."*

Refer to the imperfect or incomplete stage (Apostolic period) the Scriptures yet not complete was passing away and the perfect ("telios") unfolded and the complete revelation came. The analogy of a boy becoming a man and outgrowing boyish values is profound and speaks to the maturity or completion of Revelation—**1 Corinthians 13:11** *"When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things."*

What we have now is faith (past) in Christ's finished work. Hope (future) in Christ's return and Love (present) that will endure for eternity—**v13** *"And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love."*

Faith and Hope are essential to the Christian experience but when all things are done in Love the results are eternal.

If the (Canon of Scripture) the Bible is not complete (perfect) then we only have a partial revelation of Truth, therefore, extra Biblical revelation would be on-going. It's this error that makes the modern day movement so dangerously deceptive because the Bible's authority is undermined by modern day prophets and apostles purporting to speak on behalf of God. Experience became the new authority.

The devil is having a field day with the church because of its gross ignorance and desire for power. Sincere believers are departing from the faith and believing a lie— please **refer to 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12 and 1 Timothy 4:1-7**, and Bible authority is minimized.

The authority is God's Word *not the word of man.*